

Depoliticisation and Repoliticisation in Post-Colonial Indonesian Film Adaptations

By Dwi Setiawan

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Abstract

This study investigates the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in post-colonial Indonesian film adaptations, primarily focusing on *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* (1983) and *The Dancer* (2011), the two adaptations of Ahmad Tohari's novel *The Dancer* (1982). The investigation is motivated by a series of problems in adaptation studies, namely, the hegemony of Anglo-American texts, the domination of former British colonies in post-colonial adaptation, and the homogenising construct of the East versus the West in most post-colonial criticism. The novel and the film adaptations recount the long, internal struggles between the military and civil society in the Dutch former colony after the independence. What is prevalent yet forgotten in those works and the domestic conflicts that they emulate is the practices of depoliticisation and politicisation, which have regularly been associated with, respectively, the denial of politics by the military regime and the corruption of 'apolitical' realms by its political enemies. This thesis aims to show that the depoliticisation and

politicisation in the novel and the adaptations are much more subtle and complex than imagined. Incorporating Flinders and Wood's theory of depoliticisation, Foucault's principle of discourse, and Bourdieu's account of capital, the investigation attempts to capture the discursive depoliticisation and politicisation in the texts as well as the interrelated governmental, societal, and personal factors in adaptation.

Although the thesis is structured by the three texts, each chapter draws equal attention to the contexts, subjects, and audiences of each work and scrutinises all of them through the lenses of depoliticisation and repoliticisation. The analysis shows that the depoliticisation and politicisation in the texts generally correspond with those in the governmental, societal, private arenas in their respective eras, particularly on the problems of politics, religion, and sexuality. The novel and the first adaptation embody the typical depoliticisation during the Indonesian military era (1966-1998) in which subversive discourses and practices could surface only as a pretext/justification for the regime's suppression. The second adaptation, however, signifies the heavy politicisation in the early post-military era (1998-2004) and the subtle depoliticisation in the subsequent time in that it simultaneously interrogates and adapts 'faithfully' the issues and the conflicting parties in the informing texts and contexts.

Although the case studies are rather specific, the chosen texts and approach allow the thesis to deal with broader issues related to the socio-political history of Indonesia, the literary and filmic discourses and practices, and, in relation to the missing first film adaptation, the cultural status of adaptation studies and practices in the country. Despite their obvious focus on domestic affairs, there are traces of Hollywood's depoliticising models in both adaptations due to the long, predominant influence of American cinema in Indonesia. This fusion of intracultural and intercultural elements, the transdisciplinary political approach, and the insight from the invisible post-colonial country are the major contributions of the thesis to adaptation studies and post-colonial adaptation.

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Introduction

The Empires, Problems of Our Own, and Depoliticisation/Repoliticisation

The thesis's rationale, choice of texts, and theoretical model are explained in this introduction. Specifically, I will explore some shortcomings of adaptation studies and post-colonial adaptation critiques, the invisibility of Indonesian adaptations, the unique position of the novel *The Dancer* and its adaptations in the Indonesian literary and film history, and the potential and compatibility of the theories of depoliticisation, discourse, and capital for the research. The final part of the chapter is devoted to the research questions, objectives, methodology, and structure of the thesis.

0.1 Post-Colonial Literature and Films: The Indonesian Case

The thriving field of adaptation studies has successfully showcased a remarkable range and diversity of topics. Yet, the subject of post-colonial film adaptation is yet to be explored. In his highly revered "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation" (2005), Robert Stam acknowledges the limits of formalism and advocates the investigation of non-formal

properties. Nevertheless, he scarcely addresses post-colonialism either as an important context, a different attitude, or a distinctive technique in film adaptation, even in his specific section of 'The Impacts of the Posts'. Deborah Cartmell, in "100+ Years of Adaptation, or, Adaptation as the Art Form of Democracy" (2012), states that "the field is still dominated by Anglo-American texts, the adaptations of which tend to fetishize their nationalistic features" (7). Anglo-American adaptations, both canonical and popular, monopolise the key publications in the field such as collections of essays, textbooks, monographs, and journals. For instance, by December 2016, of the 142 original articles published in the Oxford journal of *Adaptation*, only twenty-two (15,5 percent) investigate non-Anglo-American texts and only six examine non-European texts (4,2 percent). Correspondingly, it is equally challenging to find studies of adaptation in post-colonial publications, which have been dominated by literary studies and followed recently by film studies.

Furthermore, of the few available post-colonial adaptation studies, most still revolve around adaptations from India, Nigeria, South Africa and other former British colonies. Graham Huggan, in "The Neocolonialism of Postcolonialism: A Cautionary Note" (1997), dubs this kind of imbalance "the Anglocentrism of most contemporary post-colonial criticism" (20). This is related to, if not caused by, the past and present power of the British Empire. At its height, the British Empire colonised approximately a third of the world and therefore established 'an empire where the sun never sets'. In terms of their sheer number and territorial reach, the former British colonies have easily dwarfed their non-British counterparts and this has resulted in the domination of the former in post-colonial studies. Although no longer an empire, it is hard to deny that the United Kingdom's influence in the world remains strong to this day (see, for instance, McCourt). This means that its former colonies also gain prominence through patronage, association, and/or networks. Moreover, there have been relatively peaceful and positive relations between the United Kingdom and

its former colonies and among the ex-colonies themselves. This fact has been proven by the establishment and continued existence of the Commonwealth of Nations. Aside from the economic, political, and military alliance, this has created a powerful discursive network in the world, including, but not limited to, literature and films (Bratberg).

Another important factor is the former colonies' mastery of the English language, which, according to linguist David Crystal in 2003, has become the true global language due to the past British colonialism and the present American hegemony. The former paved the way and the latter has expanded the language to territories, both virtual and physical, that the former might never even have imagined. Using the language of the empires gives former British colonies a competitive advantage, particularly in terms of access to science and knowledge. Another linguist, Robert Phillipson (1992) calls this "linguistic imperialism" and condemns it as the "reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (47). Artistic and academic works from British ex-colonies are relatively free from the mercy of translation, interpretation, and subtitling, which are not readily available and accessible in developing countries.

Literature and films from non-British former colonies have not been paid as much attention, mainly because of the language barriers and the less hegemonic position of their former colonisers. In many of those countries, English remains a foreign language even among the most educated class, albeit the most important one. Therefore, creative workers and scholars from those countries are struggling to compete with their English-speaking counterparts in terms of global production and the distribution of knowledge. As a case in point and the subject of the current study, post-colonial film adaptation has so far ignored Indonesia, the former Dutch colony in Southeast Asia. As a practice, the adaptation of literary works to films in Indonesia started as early as the late colonial era with the production of *Njai Dasima* (1929), a film adaptation of G. Francis' novel *Tjerita Njai Dasima* (1896) (see

Appendix A for a timeline of Indonesian history, cinema, and adaptation). At its peak, the Dutch scale of colonialism was diminutive in comparison with other European empires. By the end of its colonial days, the Netherlands had only two major colonies: the Dutch East Indies (the colonial name of modern Indonesia) and Suriname. Its international influence had been diminishing since the Second World War, and likewise the Dutch language. Its relationship with the ex-colonies, particularly Indonesia, had never been strong and impactful as it remains today. Due to their geographical proximity, Indonesia cannot be said to have a close and dynamic relationship with Suriname either. As a result, Indonesia does not possess the strong discursive alliance or the linguistic passport to contribute to the world's post-colonial discourses that the former British colonies have so far enjoyed.

During its early independence era, Indonesia drew the post-colonial world's attention due to the international initiatives of the outward-looking President Sukarno. He co-founded the Non-Aligned Movement, hosted the Bandung Conference with its historic Bandung Principles, and established the UN-like 'New Emerging Forces'. Those initiatives show that Indonesia and other newly independent countries were acutely aware that they were still facing two enemies on two fronts, namely, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The old empires apparently did not give up their control too easily; they wished to return to the pre-Second World War state and/or to control the newly independent countries in different ways. The Netherlands used both strategies with the young Republic of Indonesia with moderate success initially. It launched two military actions to retake the country from the Republicans. When it eventually failed to suppress the Republicans' guerrilla resistance and international lobbies, the Netherlands agreed to decolonise Indonesia in 1949, provided that the unitary Republic transformed into the United States of Indonesia under the patronage of the Netherlands. As historian Merle Ricklefs posits, in 2001, it would have been easier to defeat the federal than the unitary Indonesia because of the primordial prejudices among the member states.

The situation during the early independence era is best represented by Pramoedya Ananta Toer's early novels such as *Kranji dan Bekasi Jatuh* (1947), *Keluarga Gerilya* (1950), and *Bukan Pasar Malam* (1951). These portray the difficulties of the early independence without losing the revolutionary fervour of the era. As Krishna Sen identifies in *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order* (1994), the early independence films focus more on popular themes such as love and family than the struggle between the Republic and the Netherlands. One of the possible reasons for this is that there was a strong possibility that the Dutch would rule Indonesia again after their two successful military actions. A Dutch government film unit was even established in Jakarta in 1946. This unit produced, among others, a film adaptation of Moliere's drama entitled *Harta Karun* (1949) directed by Usmar Ismail, the father of Indonesian cinema. Private film companies played it safe while waiting for the turnout of the event. Hence, the films produced at the time "presented the image of a 'zaman normal' (normal time), ignoring the war, conflict, and political change that was taking place in Indonesia" (Sen, *Indonesian* 19).

To a certain extent, the bloody and bitter history of separation explains why Indonesia has never had a strong relation with its former master. More crucially, however, it is also related to the emergence of the new and stronger American and Russian empires. Unlike the old empires, they had little territorial ambition and direct control over post-colonial countries and preferred subtler "social, political, and ideological mechanisms" (Roberts 833). While he was fully aware of this brand-new colonialism, Sukarno also foresaw positive political prospects in building relationships with both the American and Russian empires (Vickers). With diplomatic and military backup from both empires, Indonesia eventually managed to free itself from the Netherlands by arbitrarily abolishing the federal state and returning to the unitary state in 1950.

Soon afterwards, the American and Russian empires competed to bring the patron-less Indonesia to their side. This competition of influence did not happen exclusively with Indonesia but also with other post-colonial countries such as, just to name a few, Vietnam (France's ex-colony), Cuba (Spain's ex-colony), and Korea (Japan's ex-colony). A number of post-colonial countries flocked around the American empire but many more went to the Russian empire. Although at the beginning Indonesia projected a neutral stance and therefore benefitted from both empires, it could not stand the vortex of the age for long and slowly shifted to the left side.

Not only did the struggle of influence take place in the economic, political, and military sectors, but it also extended to the fields of culture, literature, and films. This is widely represented in the literature and films of the time as a great cultural conflict between the left-wing *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat* (People's Cultural Institute) and the liberal *Manifes Kebudayaan* (Cultural Manifesto). The most complete documentation of the conflict can be found in D. S. Moeljanto and Taufik Ismail's *Prahara Budaya* (1995). The People's Cultural Institute had significant access to the Russian empire and left-wing post-colonial countries. As revealed by Wijaya Herlambang in 2013, the Cultural Manifesto received financial and intellectual support from the American empire and other western powers, including the Netherlands. Although it enjoyed a discursive alliance with the Russian and left-wing countries, Indonesia still did not have the linguistic passport (this time Russian and Mandarin) and thus left no strong mark on post-colonial literature and film.

In addition to the imbalanced exposure among post-colonial countries, post-colonial adaptation studies are also still limited in terms of topic coverage. With frequent overlaps, there are approximately three issues that dominate the subject. First of all, a substantial body of studies address the longstanding concerns about the (neo)colonial representations of the (former) colonisers and colonies. This tendency can be seen, among others, in the studies

done by Mark McCutcheon (2011), Tarek Shamma (2011), and Ricardo Guthrie (2012). Second, other researchers remain interested in the implications of (neo)colonialism for the identity of the subjects such as mimicry, hybridity, and indigeneity. Some notable studies have been conducted by Gawain Tickell (1998), Alpana Sharma (2012), and Kinga Földvary (2013). Third, ‘writing back to the empire’ has become a recent trend in the subject, as represented in the works of Mary Donaldson-Evans (2009), Jerod Hollyfield (2011), and Renate Brosch (2012).

Nevertheless, Thomas Cartelli states, in 1999, that “the practice of post-colonial writers to write back has by now been exhaustively documented” and was “the configuration during the first stage of Third World postcoloniality” (106). Radicalising Cartelli’s point, Eckart Voigts, in 2014, contends that this type of subversion has, to some degree, become a “stereotype” (55). Commenting on the adaptations of *The Tempest* (1611), he states that “attempts to ‘equalize’ the central text, to rewrite or perform a Caliban as good as Prospero, tend to reinforce its cultural status and thus the colonizer’s perspective”. The post-colonial subject is forever measured against the former master and, therefore, is forever under his shadow.

Indeed, there are fewer post-colonial adaptation studies that deal with the ‘internal affairs’ of post-colonial nations. As stated by Arun P. Mukherjee in “Whose Post-Colonialism and Whose Postmodernism?” (1990), post-colonial studies have relied too long on the homogenising construct of the Centre (the West) versus the Periphery (the East). Thus, they tend to fixate on what Eastern texts want to say to the Western audience and thus maintain the privilege of the latter. The fact is that post-colonial countries and adaptations have “their own internal centres and peripheries, their own dominants and marginal”, and their own conflicts (Mukherjee 6). However, it should be noted that, although cultural productions in post-colonial countries are created in response to their own needs, they are

never completely immune from the interests of the old and new empires. Even what Mukherjee calls “our own needs” could possibly be the empires’ needs in disguise or, at the very least, the results of power relations between the empires and the post-colonial countries. At any rate, post-colonial subjects cannot live outside their past experiences and influences in their present life. In today’s world, it is even less possible to live beyond the influences of other countries, particularly the dominant American empire. So, internal affairs, our own needs, or problems of our own, as they are referred to in this study, merely indicate a focus or a starting point for analysis, not a denial of the existing influences of the old and new empires.

Hitherto the most prominent topic of ‘internal’ studies has been nationalism and its failure in post-colonial countries. This failure could possibly be attributed to the highly discursive and contested concept of nationalism itself. *The English Oxford Living Dictionaries* defines nationalism as, among other things, the “advocacy of political independence for a particular country”. Yet, as John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith observe in the Oxford Reader of *Nationalism* (1994), there has been no agreement among scholars or politicians with regard to the idea. Eric Hobsbawn (1990) and Ernest Gellner (1997) argue that both nation and nationalism are neither primordial nor inherently distinguishable. A number of theoretical works, such as those of Benedict Anderson (1983), Partha Chatterjee (1986), and Timothy Brennan (1990), have revealed how this highly discursive concept contributes to its challenges in post-colonial countries. Second, as pointed out by John McLeod in 2000, nationalism was and is the dominant anti-colonial discourse whereas this ideology was born in Europe, the home of the colonisers. In using nationalism, many anti-colonial governments could not avoid perpetuating its undemocratic aspects such as gender discrimination, racism, and linguistic uniformity. These problems have been studied respectively by Kumari Jayawardana (1986), Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein

(1991), and Emma LaRocque (1989). Third, nationalism was typically introduced and propagated in colonised and post-colonial countries by local western-educated elites (Chatterjee; Guha and Spivak). They received education from their colonisers, enjoyed the embedded prestige, and wished to maintain that superiority after independence. Thus, nationalism merely shifted the oppressive structure from the western masters to those local western-educated elites. It was often the case that the elites fought one another for power and failed to bring the promises of a better future to their subjects. Eventually, postcolonial subjects started feeling disenchanted, not only with the elites, but also with nationalism. This fairly universal development has been explicated in the works of Bruce King (1995) and Simon Gikandi (1996). It has also been portrayed in numerous post-colonial novels and films and scrutinised in adaptation studies, such as that by Lindiwe Dovey (2005) on post-apartheid South Africa and that by Ranjani Mazumdar (2015) on post-independence India.

In Indonesia's case, Indonesian subjects had to experience political turbulence, armed rebellions, and economic hardships immediately after Independence Day on 17 August 1945. In terms of state form, for instance, Indonesia had to go from a unitary (1945-9) to a federal (1949-50) and back to a unitary state again (1950-present). It also remodelled its government system from a presidential (1945) to a parliamentary (1950) and back to a presidential system (1959) again. Its constitution changed from the 1945 Constitution to the 1950 Provisional Constitution and back to the 1945 Constitution in 1959. Adrian Vickers, in *A History of Modern Indonesia* (2005), demonstrates how these constant changes were not caused just by the pressures of the Netherlands but also by the perpetual intra-elite conflicts. Defeated or marginalised elites declared their secessions from the Republic and started armed rebellions all over the country. The economy suffered from the unstable conditions and, later, Sukarno's great armament and ambitious projects. As stated by Y.B. Mangunwijaya (1995), post-colonial Indonesian subjects secretly missed the more peaceful and orderly time under Dutch

colonialism and hoped that the Republican era would be over soon. This hardship and discontent is portrayed in literature and films such as *Korupsi* (1954), *Lewat Jam Malam* (1954), and *Twilight in Jakarta* (1963).

The emphasis on nationalism and its failure shows that the internal studies have so far focused on the early stage of the independence era. Despite its failure, nationalism has continued to play a major role in the increasingly global world (Gellner; Hobsbawn). Post-colonial adaptation studies have not exhaustively addressed the later era, when post-colonial subjects' disappointment with the western-educated elites' nationalism was typically exploited by military forces. As J.E. Goldthorpe observes in *The Sociology of Post-Colonial Societies* (1996), a substantial number of post-colonial countries have fallen into the grip of military regimes. Eric Nordlinger (1977) defines military regimes as "states in which military officers are major or predominant political actors by virtue of their actual or threatened use of force" (2). This development took place, and is still taking place, on almost every continent (including Europe) and all regions of the world. John Gaddis, in *The Cold War: A New History* (2005), reveals how new military governments received assistance from either the American or the Russian empire, depending on their ideological orientation and/or interests.

In some cases, particularly in the beginning, the regimes received popular support because they were seen as the saviour from the politicking western-educated elites and the unstable situation. As stated by Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell in *Authoritarian Regimes: Stability, Change, and Pathways to Democracy, 1972-2003* (2006), military regimes characteristically "exercise political power either directly or indirectly (i.e., by controlling civilian leaders behind the scenes)" (6). Some military regimes abolished all of the political parties, such as in Niger (1983-8), Pakistan (1982-7), and Panama (1972-9). Several others allowed only one political party formed by the military, such as in Algeria (1977-91), Iraq (1980-2002), and Myanmar (1974-87). Some others allowed multi parties but with one

dominant party created and supported by the military, such as in Honduras (1980-2), Turkey (1983-5), and Indonesia (1971-1998). In *Political Censorship* (2001), Robert Goldstein describes how the political restrictions affected not only the area of real politics but also all sectors in life, including literature and cinema. Literary works and films were forbidden to take up political issues or voice political opinions that differed from those of the regimes. Censorship and censorship machines were an integral part of literary and cinematic life. Authors and filmmakers who broke the restrictions or the political line of the regimes could be jailed, tortured, or even murdered.

Suffocated by the absence of freedom, non-state and non-market actors, which Antonio Gramsci calls “civil society”, resisted the military regimes and in several cases, they succeeded (qtd. in Beittenger-Lee 15). As seen by Richard Joseph (1998) in Africa, the post-military era is often typified by a period of political revival. Free elections are held and new political parties are established. In some cases, this is followed by political, ethnic, and religious conflicts because the long-repressed differences under the military regimes begin to surface. These unfortunate developments have been witnessed in Latin America by Tony Karl (1990). There is also a great revival of political literature and cinema in the cultural sector as highlighted, for instance, in the works of Kuan-Hsing Chen and Chua Beng Huat (2007) and Ariel Heryanto (2008). Political literature and cinema enthusiastically interrogate and criticise the discourses and practices of the military regimes. Censorship does exist but this time it is carried out by professionals and/or independent public figures.

In Indonesia, the government of the western-educated elites under Sukarno was succeeded by the military regime under General Suharto through an indirect coup. This coup began with the assassination of six army generals on 1 October 1965 by a group of junior officers, whom Suharto accused as being infiltrated by the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, henceforth, the PKI), then the strongest political supporter of

Sukarno and the arch enemy of the military. Having the necessary pretext, Suharto orchestrated the systematic persecution and killing of about one million accused communists and Sukarno loyalists (Roosa). Unlike his left-wing, internationalist predecessor, Suharto was more complex and enigmatic. On the one hand, he appeared more inward-looking and focused more on domestic affairs. He regularly warned the country of ‘westernisation’ and censored western and ‘western-inspired’ readings and films (see, for example, Stanley; Garcia; Sen, *Indonesian*). Yet, he extensively liberalised the economy and opened the country widely to foreign capital. Suharto received strong international support from the western world, particularly the USA, the UK, and Australia, during the extermination of the accused communists and, as studied by Hilmar Farid in 2007, the invasion of East Timor.

During the heyday of the military/Suharto/New Order era (1970s-80s), the local film industry experienced a boom never seen before and, perhaps, not surpassed up to now. The number of Indonesian film adaptations also grew significantly in that era. Most of the film adaptations were popular films derived from popular novels such as *Cintaku di Kampus Biru* (1976), *Mencari Cinta* (1979), and *Kembang Padang Kelabu* (1980). Following the cultural policy of the regime, Indonesian ‘serious’ literature seemed to turn their attention inward. They portrayed local cultures and local problems but not in relation to their colonial and neo-colonial experiences. This can be seen from the works of Kuntowijoyo, Umar Kayam, and Ahmad Tohari. Others tried to transcend their post-coloniality by exploiting more universal themes and forms such as absurdism and surrealism, as in the works of Iwan Simatupang, Putu Wijaya, and Budi Darma. There were a few films about the anti-colonial struggles but most of them focused on the military’s role, particularly Suharto’s, in the war for independence, such as in *Mereka Kembali* (1972), *Janur Kuning* (1979), and *Serangan Fajar* (1981). Some others told stories about the pre-modern rebellions of the natives such as

November 1828 (1978) and *Tjoet Nja' Dhien* (1986), but they all portrayed armed resistance and thus supported military glorification.

Most literary works and adaptations, both popular and 'serious', during the military era were apolitical in the sense that they posed no challenge to the political lines of the regime. It was related to the spirit of the military government, which championed economic growth while at the same time subduing political freedom. The government's censorship machine banned political literature and films or cut parts and scenes in which any perceived political messages were present (see, for instance, Garcia; Heryanto, *State*; Sen, "Language"). Concurrently, as discussed by Michael Vatikiosis in *Indonesian Politics under Soeharto* (1998), the military government mobilised its ideological state apparatus to propagate the importance of economic growth and 'the evil of politics'. The regime worked together with, if not steered, the professionals such as big-time artists, writers, and directors, who set the aesthetic standard of the day: the liberal 'art for art's sake' (Herlambang, *Kekerasan*).

The military government was toppled in 1998 by a popular strike following the great Asian monetary crisis, and the post-military, post-Suharto, or Reformation era, as it is known locally, began. For a period of time, there was a resurgence of political novels and films to quench the thirst of the politically repressed public. Intellectuals and creative workers, including literary and film communities, have enjoyed greater freedom ever since. Indonesian cinema, which experienced a decline in the last days (1990s) of the military era, has been experiencing a revival in terms of production and audiences, and so have film adaptations. Some of the famous adaptations are *Laskar Pelangi* (2008), *Sang Penari* (2011), and *Tenggelamnya Kapal van der Wijk* (2013).

0.2 The ‘Exceptional’ Literature and Films

There is always an exception to the rule. Although few and mostly implicit, there were political novels as well as political films during the military era. One of the most famous political novels at the time was Pramoedya Ananta Toer’s *This Earth of Mankind* (1980). Narrating the story of an early freedom fighter and his growing nationalistic consciousness, this tetralogy has attracted numerous post-colonial readings worldwide. *This Earth of Mankind* won many international awards and the author was regularly nominated for the Nobel Prize. Unfortunately, the novel was and still is officially banned in Indonesia by the Office of the Attorney General for ‘spreading the communist teachings’ mainly due to the status of the author as an ex-communist prisoner. No filmmaker has so far dared to adapt this famous tetralogy into a film, not only due to the official banning but also because of the current pressure from Islamic fundamentalist groups. There was also a political novel that was adapted into a political film, *Max Havelaar* (1860) to *Max Havelaar (Saijah dan Adinda)* (1975). The original adaptation did not even see the light of day because of censorship and was only circulated among political activists. How censorship is manifested in the country will be discussed in detail in 1.1 and 2.1.

There was also a political novel that was adapted into a non-political film, and that is one of the subjects of this research. *The Dancer* was written by Ahmad Tohari and first published as a trilogy of novels, namely, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk (The Dancer of Paruk Village, 1982)*, *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari (A Shooting Star at Dawn, 1985)*, and *Jantera Bianglala (The Rainbow’s Arc, 1986)*. The trilogy is set immediately before, during, and shortly after the killing and persecution of the accused Indonesian Communist Party supporters (1965-1966). The story of *The Dancer* revolves around the life of a *ronggeng* or a traditional erotic dancer from Paruk village named Srintil, who performs in political rallies of the PKI. Following the aborted coup on 01 October 1965, the military accuses the PKI of

being the mastermind behind the coup and launches a manhunt for the communists throughout the country. Srintil is implicated, captured, and imprisoned without trial. She survives the great ordeal but must continue her life with ex-communist status, which is the worst stigma one could have during the military era (1966-1998) in Indonesia. Alexandra Pironti describes it best when she says, “if the caste system existed in Indonesia”, the accused communists would surely be “the untouchables: for decades, they and their families have been banned from jobs and access to education and, until 2005, their identity cards marked them as former political prisoners” (par. 1).

After writing this trilogy, Ahmad Tohari reportedly had to face a long, ‘ideological interrogation’ by the military, and the work went through some censorship. This should not be surprising since the trilogy is the first literary work to address the subject of the PKI and 1965 conflict. Yet, the fact that the censored version could be legally circulated at all indicates that the military sensed that in the 1980s “enough time had passed since the killings of 1965 that the spectre of a re-emergent PKI (Indonesian Communist Party) had begun to lose some of its currency” (Barker, “State” 10). Another possible factor is that the political line of the author and his work was not considered to be against that of the regime, which will be addressed in Chapter One. Aside from the intrinsic qualities of the work, it is its double status as the pioneer of 1965 stories and a victim of censorship that has put *The Dancer* on the national and, eventually, the international map. Tohari himself has written other short stories and novels and, in fact, also won due recognition and awards for those works. Yet, none has attracted as much attention from laymen and scholars as *The Dancer*.

As an indicator of public interest, the censored version of the trilogy was reprinted more than four times. The first and second books were translated into Japanese by Shinobu Yamane in 1986, Dutch by Monique Sardjono-Soesman in 1993 and 1998, and German by Giok Hiang Gornik in 1996 and 1997. The reason why the trilogy was translated and

published in those three countries, instead of others, is that at that time they had the closest business and cultural relationship with Indonesia and, therefore, the strongest interest in the country. The uncensored version of the trilogy was eventually published in a single volume in 2003 following the collapse of the military regime and has been reprinted nine times, including the one with a new cover taken from the poster of its second film adaptation in 2011. This testifies the public's great enthusiasm for the previously forbidden subject of the PKI, the 1965 massacre, and the military's atrocities.



Fig. 1. The unabridged, single volume of the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy (2003).

Also in 2003, Rene T. A. Lysloff translated the unabridged version of the trilogy into English for international readers under the title *The Dancer*. As the translator explains in his

introduction, he began translating the book as early as 1986 for his personal use, as a researcher of rural performance traditions. The reason why his translation was only published in 2003 is not clear. It might be related to the post-9/11 global interest in Islam, which is another important topic in the novel that the translator is keen to address in the introduction. The English translation was revised and republished in 2012, following the release of the second film adaptation one year earlier. Perhaps for the same reason, Sarjono-Soesman followed suit with the publication of the single-volume Dutch translation entitled *Dansmeisje uit mijn dorp: trilogie* in 2012.

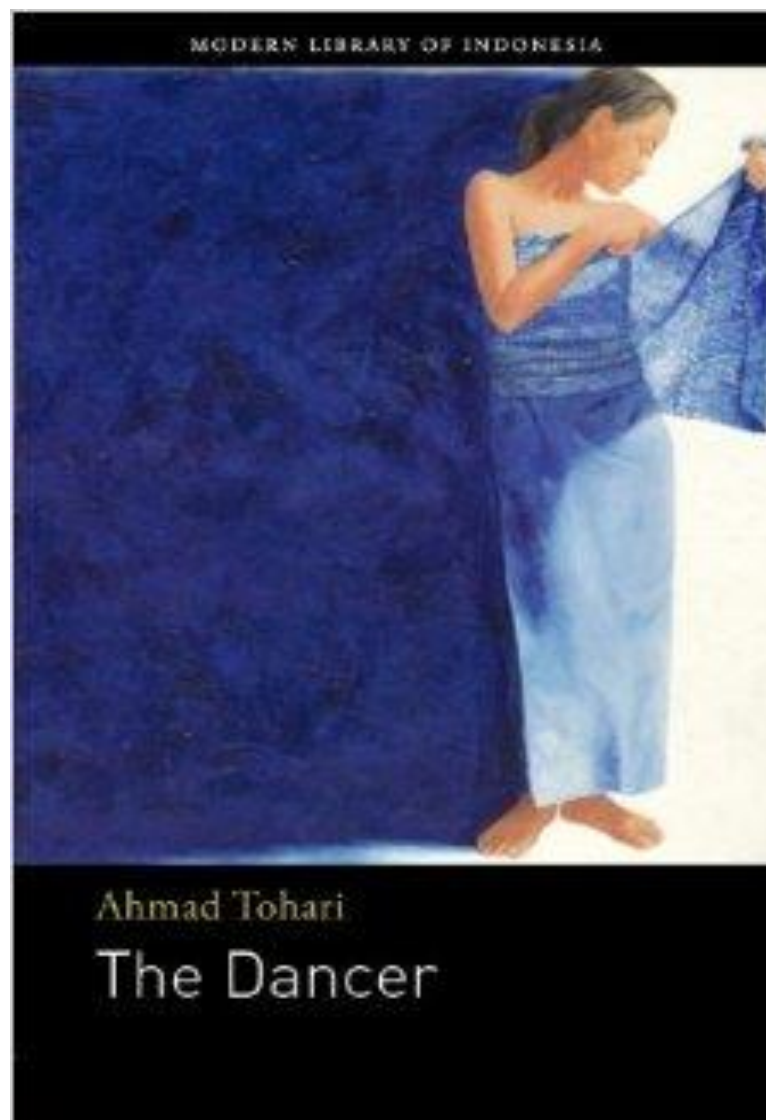


Fig. 2. The book cover of *The Dancer*, the English translation of the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy.

Another indicator of the positive public reception is the number of news articles on the novel in magazines and newspapers, both in online and offline formats. Furthermore, Tohari's *The Dancer* has also attracted the interest of scholars both from the country and abroad. This novel has been studied numerous times, in various forms, and with different approaches. Most of the studies address a rather obvious subject matter of the novel i.e. the persecution and killing of the accused communists in 1965-6. Keith Foulcher, in 1998, credits *The Dancer* as one of the first Indonesian novels written during the military era that are "returning to the Indonesian novel's traditional concern with realist narrative and social criticism", and states that, "it does not shy away from the events of 1965 and 1966" (par. 18). Yoseph Taum (2003) seeks to relate the content of the novel to the notion of collective memory as a starting point for a wider national reconciliation. Michael Garcia (2004) writes that the greatest contribution of the book and the reason why it was censored is its "portrayal of local deprivation following Suharto's rise to power" (122). Anna-Greta N. Hoadley (2005) takes this novel, along with a few others, to explain the tragedy of 1965-1966 from the viewpoint of the victims, and thus to provide a counter version to the official history from the military regime. In response to Hoadley's book, Michael Bodden (2006) calls *The Dancer* "the best known . . . of memorable works recounting the events of 1965-1966 and the effects of their aftermath" (660-1). In contrast, John Roosa, also in 2006, considers Tohari and his colleagues "anti-communists . . . [who] tended to depict the communists as being aggressive, violent, and irreligious . . . [and] considered the mass killings and arrests in 1965-1966 an understandable . . . measure of popular self-defense" ("Indonesian" 685-6). All of the studies above can be categorised into New Historicist analyses, as they "insist upon the historical particularity" and the "social and political function" of a literary work (Martin 152-3). They collectively represent *The Dancer* "not simply as a product of history" because "it actively

makes history” by redefining individual victims, the Javanese community, and Indonesian society (Bertens 156).

The second group of studies of *The Dancer* belong to the school of Structuralism as they appear to be interested in “the internal structure” and “the formal properties” of the novel, especially the language and the narrative (Martin 96 & 106). Employing the semiotic and genetic-structuralist framework, Taufik Dermawan (1992) seeks to reveal the coherence of the semiotic structure of the trilogy and the socio-cultural structure of the society in which the author lives. Using the stylistic and semiotic approach, Ali Al Ma’ruf, in 2010, demonstrates the intertextuality of *The Dancer*, *The Holy Qur’an*, and Javanese local wisdoms. Khristianto (2013), with the assistance of the Levi-Straussian method, describes how Srintil becomes the centre of relations between the characters in the novel and how each character occupies his/her unique position within the structure of the story.

Javanese culture has indeed become another major area of interest in the study of the trilogy. This culture of the ethnic majority is one of the most important elements in contemporary Indonesian novels due to its national hegemony during the government of Suharto, a Javanese. This cultural element is ever more important in the case of Tohari’s (himself a Javanese) *The Dancer*, which tells the story of a Javanese dancer and her community. Nancy I. Cooper, in 2004, tries to see the link between Javanese culture and gender discourse. Cooper powerfully describes how *The Dancer* represents complex Javanese cultural ideologies and gender practices in transition from a local and simple lifestyle to a more international and modern existence. This might be the only study that relates *The Dancer* to Post-Colonialism, although the relation is rather implicit. Eka Kurniawan (2012), a young Indonesian novelist and critic, explores how Tohari, in *The Dancer*, sees the tragedy of 1965-1966 as a failure on the part of the characters as Javanese subjects to read signs of

nature (“Tragedi”). Nurpaisah, Martono, and Sesilia Seli (2014) discuss the novel’s Javanese values in terms of three relational areas: man-to-man, man-to-nature, and man-to God.

It might be not surprising that a number of scholars of gender studies are also interested in the novel, as Srintil and her characterisation promise a rich source for gender analyses. One of the most comprehensive studies of the representations of women in Indonesian literature is done by Tineke Hellwig (1994). She chooses *The Dancer* as one of the major works for her analysis and reveals how the male author tends to portray women in a favourable light. Ria Yunita, Christanto Syam, and Agus Wartiningsih further reveal, in 2013, the three modes of gender discrimination being criticised in the trilogy, namely, marginalisation, stereotype, and violence. Dance researcher Felicia Hughes-Freeland, in 2008, expresses a rather different opinion from that of Hellwig and Yunita *et al.* She argues that Ahmad Tohari’s novel conforms to the “New Order representational patterns of female experience by portraying the female dancer as a victim who can only be ‘saved’ by the agency of males” (145).

There are a few studies that discuss the translations of the novel to other languages. The first is conducted by Julia Rini (2005) who analyses the efforts of the English translator to bring the readers of his translation into the culture of the story. Sugeng Priyadi (2007) evaluates the author’s own translation to the local dialect of Banyumas by applying Newmark’s theoretical framework. Ajeng Kusumastuti, in 2008, offers a linguistic analysis of the translation of the first person personal pronouns in the Indonesian to the Japanese version. Indah Bumi (2011) analyses the translator’s techniques and method in translating the novel’s cultural terms to English. Puspita Purbasari and Khristianto (2014) examine the untranslatability of cultural terms in the translation of the Indonesian version to the English version.

In an attempt to capitalise on the success of the first book of the trilogy, a year later Gramedia Film produced its cinematic adaptation under the title *Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng* (*Blood and Crown of the Dancer*, my trans.). The directing was entrusted to a then unknown young director Yazman Yazid, who had directed only one film previously. Starring an Indonesian ‘bombshell’ Enny Beatrice as Srintil and a popular actor Ray Sahetapy as her boyfriend Rasus, the film starts with the story of a small girl in Paruk village named Srintil, who is thought to have the blood of a ronggeng dancer. The village shaman Kartareja and his wife train Srintil physically and mentally to be a ronggeng dancer. Approaching puberty, Srintil must undergo the Buka Klambu ceremony, which involves giving up her virginity to the highest bidder. Rasus, Srintil's boyfriend, attempts to take his girlfriend away but is stopped by a local gangster Sulam, who also desires Srintil's virginity. The failed attempt leaves them separated, as Rasus is thrown into a ravine and the Buka Klambu ceremony proceeds. Rasus escapes the ravine and reattempts to free his beloved, this time successfully. Soon after Rasus and Srintil both flee to a nearby area.

There is no available data on the reception of *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* by its contemporary audience and actually the film is still missing. There have been virtually no popular or critical commentaries on this adaptation. The screening of the second adaptation in 2011 revived its name although from that moment the first adaptation has consistently received unfavourable and dismissive comparisons to the second adaptation. Tohari claims that he has never and will never watch the film (Soebagyo; Krismantari, “Return”; Kurniasari, “Ronggeng”). Writing for *The Jakarta Post*, Ika Krismantari (2011) calls it “a cheap pseudo-porn flick” (“Return” par. 4). Another film critic Triwik Kurniasari (2011) states that, “the film maker moved too far and turned the film into X-rated material, while failing to capture the real message of the book” (“Ronggeng” par. 2). These negative judgements might partly have been caused by the misled belief that, unlike the second

adaptation, the first adaptation only narrates the early parts of the novel which focusing on the making of Srintil into an erotic dancer, and ignores the latter parts where she encounters the PKI. The fact is that the first book, on which the first adaptation was based, does not have any material regarding the PKI, which only appears in the second book, published two years after the release of the first adaptation.

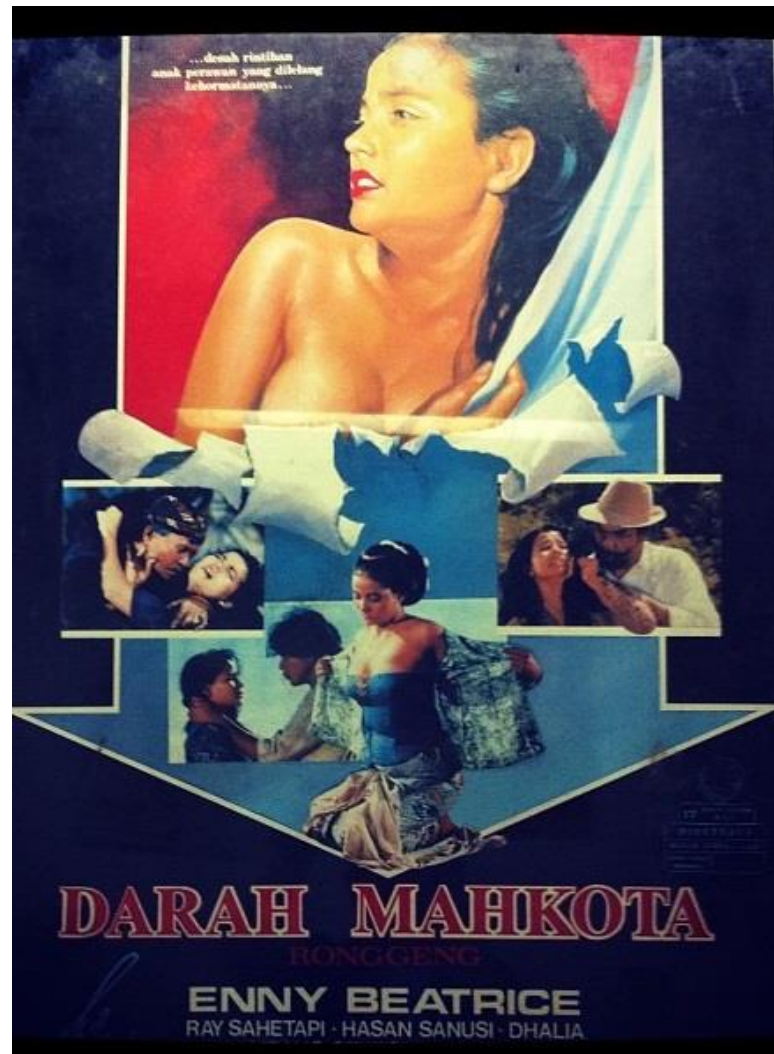


Fig. 3. The film poster of *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*, the film adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*.

The Dancer was adapted for the second time into a film entitled *Sang Penari* (also translated into *The Dancer*) by a young and famous director, Ifa Isfansyah. According to Isfansyah, the plan to readapt the novel started as early as 2000 with the purchase of the

book's copyright ("Aku"). As highlighted previously, at the time the public were still highly politicised and curious to know about forbidden subjects during the military era. For various reasons, this plan could only materialise a decade later, when the situation was quite different (see 3.1). Nevertheless, this second adaptation makes Ahmad Tohari's *The Dancer* practically the only Indonesian political novel to have been adapted twice. More importantly, the novel was adapted in two different eras in post-independence Indonesia: the military and the civil society eras.



Fig. 4. The film poster of *The Dancer*, the film adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy.

The second adaptation is more politically charged than the first. It follows the spirit of the new era: talking about or interrogating the policies and actions of the military regime. As with Yazid's adaptation, Isfansyah's *The Dancer* also narrates the making of Srintil as a ronggeng. Nevertheless, far from stopping at that point, this serves only as a background to the real confrontation. Frustrated by Srintil's determination to be a ronggeng, Rasus runs away from Paruk village and works as an office boy at a local army base, where he befriends and wins the trust of Sergeant Binsar, who teaches him to read and recruits him as a soldier. Meanwhile, the villagers of Paruk begin to support the PKI under Bakar's influence despite their ignorance of politics. Following the failed coup in the capital, Srintil is seized, imprisoned in a hidden concentration camp, and raped by a militia man. Rasus hurries back to his native village only to find her dagger and Sakum, the blind percussion player. Rasus continues his search and arrives at the concentration camp just as Srintil is being transported to another camp. Years later, Rasus sees Srintil and Sakum performing in a traditional market, and returns her lost dagger.

In the eyes of film critics, *The Dancer* is considered a new milestone in the Indonesian film history. It secured nine nominations at the 2011 Indonesian Film Festival, winning four of them, namely best film, best director, best actress in a leading role, and best actress in a supporting role. Kurniasari praises the film's cast and crew, who are a mixture of seasoned film professionals and young talented newcomers. Her final "verdict" on the film is that it is "an artistically stunning piece depicting cross-border love, the hardships of rural life and the grisly carnage of the bloody September, 1965, massacre" (par. 21). Labodalih Sembiring (2011) is no less generous in his praise of Isfansyah's *The Dancer*: "critics can dissect any movie, but only great films are worthy of deep analysis. As a film that aims to shine light on a sliver of national history, "Sang Penari" begs for the audience's critical eye. It contains an eye-opening narrative, especially for people who were only ever taught just one

side of the story it deals with” (“Gripping” par. 1). Similar to Kurniasari, Sembiring applauds the cast, who “relate admirably to the socio-cultural elements that wrap each of an ensemble of characters befitting a Shakespearean tragedy” (par. 11). He also admires the cinematography and the art direction, which are “reminiscent of great pictures from Indonesian cinema’s golden period” (par. 13). The aspects of which he disapproves are the precarious acting of Priska Nasution and the music. On the contrary, Lisa Siregar, also in 2011, commends the acting of the leading actress, who is able to speak the local dialect naturally in spite of the fact that it is not her mother tongue. Like the previous critics, she also compliments the cinematography of the film.

The adaptation has received a warm welcome from the author of the novel as well as film critics. In stark contrast to his reaction to *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*, the author asserts:

“Ifa has succeeded in grasping the spirit of the novel,” . . . The bespectacled man even confessed that Ifa had made him cry with scenes that exposed the mass killing of innocents by the military because of their alleged connection with communism. (Krismantari, “Return” par. 6-7)

Kurniasari states in another report:

This time, the flick has the author practically weeping with joy. A big smile finally flashes on his face, and he says he considers it a sublime adaptation of his writing, without losing the heart and soul of the core idea.

Tohari gave Sang Penari positive remarks, saying that the movie really represented the idea of his novel. (“Ronggeng” par. 4 & 20)

Besides his positive response, what is fairly interesting in the reports above is the fact that Tohari does not applaud the film because it is a faithful adaptation of his novel, in the sense of what Geoffrey Wagner in *The Novel and The Cinema* (1975) calls “transposition, in which

[the] novel is given directly on the screen, with a minimum of apparent interference” (222). It is agreeable to Tohari because it “grasps the spirit of the novel”; it is “a sublime adaptation”, “represent[ing] the idea of the novel”.

Echoing Tohari, the critics jointly praise the indirect adaptation of the novel for the second film. Kurniasari highlights the achievement of the director who “smoothly translates the sinister moment and the vicious attempts taken by the military in handling possible traitors, sending a swift quiver to your spine, emotionally scrambling your heart when all contentment and tranquillity in the hamlet are gone in a blink of an eye” (“Ronggeng” par. 19). Sembiring defends Isfansyah’s omissions of several unimportant details in the novel and points out how the film pays attention to more crucial details:

Historians may be disappointed with several unsubstantiated details surrounding the introduction, the sway and the obliteration of the Communist Party in this film — for example, the missing significance of a caping hijau, or green peasant hat, in a major scene at Eyang Secamenggala’s tomb.

But Indonesians as a whole should be grateful that a movie that pays minute attention to the circumstances surrounding the 1965 killings has finally been made. That some teenagers who were laughing and giggling at the beginning of the film left the theater with a puzzled look, and started small discussions, is surely a good sign. (“Gripping” par. 14-5)

Siregar considers the adaptation successful in keeping with the main theme of the novel i.e. “about normal people who are naive about the country’s complex political situation” (“Dancing” par. 17). However, this time she gives the credit to the screenwriter Salman Aristo, who:

went through 12 drafts for ‘Sang Penari’ before settling on a plot, a process that took about two years of research and discussions.

“This is a rural point of view about the 30 September Movement, and I had to make a few changes from the book to support this perspective,” Salman said.
(par. 18-9)

The only dissenting opinion on the adaptation comes from Rz Soebagyo (2011):

If there is a small weakness, it is because the film is an interpretation of the director on the novel. Those who have not read the book version will be confused in following the scenes which change so fast with no complementary, explanatory scenes.

Those who have read the book will protest because Ifa has made changes in his film so that it deviates slightly from the novel.

"In the last part of the film it is written that the film is “inspired by *The Dancer* the novel”, so I am not filming the novel but am taking inspiration from it” explained Ifa. (par. 23-5, my trans.)

It appears that the director understands ‘the danger’ in filming such a well-respected novel. Calling his film an inspired work rather than a work of adaptation could be his effort to avoid questions regarding its fidelity from the public and the media. His understanding of this danger is also shared by the screenwriter, who does not miss his opportunity to express his admiration for the novel. Aristo states “[t]his novel is a brave one . . . It is important not only for Indonesian literature, but also for our history” (Siregar, “Dancing” par. 20).

Furthermore, the critics also praise the second adaptation for its portrayal of the 1965-6 massacre. While the novel describes the massacre only implicitly and the first adaptation avoided it altogether, the second film makes the tragedy of 1965-6 the centre of its narrative and narration. In Sembiring’s account:

That the book addresses the events of 1965, no matter how curtailed, is in every respect courageous, but the film goes further, revealing the horror that Ahmad witnessed but could not write about . . .

Few other films have even dared take on that content, either misrepresenting or ignoring the massacres and contributing to a conspicuous void in the national dialogue. [*The Dancer*] could have done the same and stayed true to the book by only offering mere glimpses of what really happened, but the movie's fresh story line was adapted with a sharp eye. ("Gripping" par. 3-4)

Ahmad Tohari himself acknowledges the courage of the film director: "I like that this film visualizes what the poor were going through, and it shows the killings I witnessed at the time but couldn't write about in my novel" (Siregar, "Dancing" par. 3). Yet, he does not forget to highlight the context in which his novel was written: "[The Dancer] was first published in the 1980s, when Suharto's anti-communist New Order regime was still in power. Had I written about the killings, I probably would have been shot by Suharto" (par. 4).

Although the film has garnered much attention from film critics and the media, it has not fared well in the market. According to Yan Wijaya, a senior observer of Indonesian films, by December 2011, the film had been watched by less than 300,000 people, which is a small number even by Indonesian standards, despite the awards and the media's attention (Fahrul). It was surpassed easily by its contemporary *Arwah Goyang Kerawang* (*Karawang Dancing Spirit*, 2011), which drew more than 720,000 people and resembles *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* in its alleged focus on sex and sexuality. Furthermore, the number and variety of studies on the film are much less than expected. The critiques that I have just reviewed are all from the most respected newspapers in the nation but only two pieces of academic writing have so far been identified. Lucky Prahesti, in 2013, investigates the changes in the intrinsic properties (theme, characterisation, plot, and setting) of the narrative in the adaptation of the

novel to the script of the second film adaptation. Ariel Heryanto, in *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* (2014), calls this film “a domestically produced commercial film that poses the most politically critical stance to the official ideology so far” while it “does not take the next step of challenging or transcending the New Order’s overall ideological framework” (102). Heryanto makes an honourable mention of *The Dancer* rather than discussing it as a key work in his investigation of Indonesian screen culture.

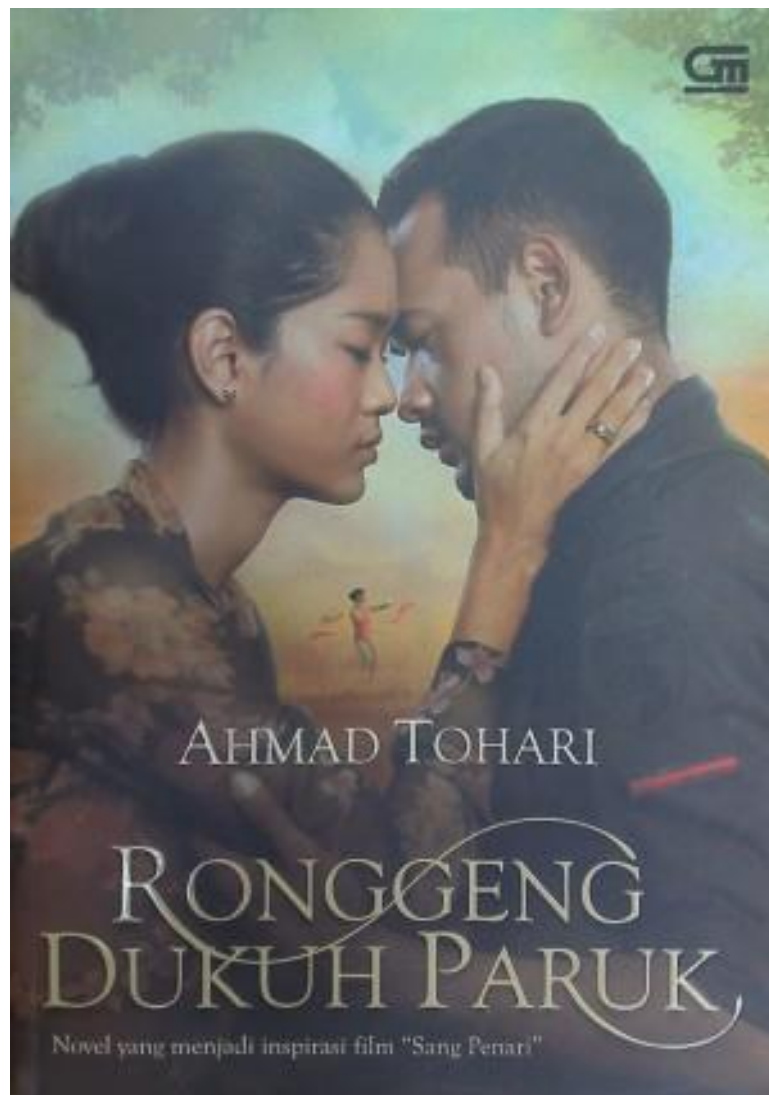


Fig. 5. The new book cover of the *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* trilogy, following the screening of Isfansyah’s *The Dancer*.

Taken together, Ahmad Tohari’s *The Dancer* and its film adaptations occupy a unique position in the history of Indonesian literature and cinema. The novel is set in the early

independence era, written and first adapted in the succeeding military period, and adapted once again in the current post-military time, thus covering all the eras in the post-independence Indonesia. Moreover, the book and the films encapsulate the long, internal struggles between the military and civil society, which are typical in post-colonial nations but still wanting in post-colonial criticism. Together they also reflect the longstanding issue in the history of the country and the history of Indonesian literature and cinema: the practices of depoliticisation (usually associated with the government's political oppression) and politicisation (the civil society's attempts to promote political issues). This important issue has not been properly addressed in the existing literature on the novel and the adaptations, adaptation studies, and post-colonial studies. In the following section, I will discuss the issue of depoliticisation and politicisation further under the guidance of relevant theories.

0.3 Depoliticisation/Repoliticisation

Power relations between military regimes and civil societies in post-colonial countries regularly involve what political scientists term 'depoliticisation' and 'repoliticisation'. There have been numerous definitions of these political processes and some are rather conflicting due to different applications in different eras. Writing in 1992, Jacques Ranciere states that "depoliticisation is the oldest task in politics" (19) and politics is basically a competition between two essential activities: depoliticising and repoliticising. Matthew Flinders and Matt Wood, in "Depoliticisation, Governance and the State" (2014), define depoliticisation as "attempts to stifle or diffuse conflict" and repoliticisation as "the emergence and intensification of friend-enemy conflict" (139). Depoliticisation and repoliticisation apply to both obviously politically biased arenas (such as state, governance, and parties) and ostensibly politically neutral realms (such as culture, literature, and cinema).

Flinders and Woods observe that scholars in the past have associated depoliticisation with “the denial of politics or the imposition of a specific (and highly politicised) model of statecraft” (136). It may represent the general political situations in post-colonial communist countries such as Cuba, North Korea, and China, where people have been denied political choices and voices. The governments typically impose a single political belief, party, and governance, that is, Communism. Ironically, post-colonial anti-communist countries, mostly governed by military regimes, have also implemented the same authoritarian approach, such as Chile (1973-1990), Taiwan (1949-1987), and Indonesia (1966-1998) (Hadenius and Theorel). The difference is that in the latter countries anti-communism became the main political line. Here conflicts were discouraged and even repressed with coercion because they were considered communistic and/or the enemy of ‘stability’. Within this perspective, repoliticisation, as the anti-thesis of depoliticisation, refers to the re-allowance and encouragement of politics and multi models of statecraft. Conflicts are seen as a healthy part of life and therefore are encouraged rather than discouraged. Repoliticisation typically takes place when the civil societies try to free or have successfully liberated themselves from the authoritarian regimes.

Nevertheless, more and more scholars these days associate depoliticisation with “the narrowing of the boundaries of democratic politics”; “the transfer of functions away from elected politicians”; or “the removal of politics” (Flinders and Wood 135-6). The present-day depoliticisation is characterised by the transfer of power from democratically elected politicians to unelected professionals and technocrats. Policy making and enforcement are no longer the exclusive domains of governments and parliaments but are given to and/or shared with independent committees, commissions, or boards. Thus, the contemporary repoliticisation involves the returning of power from those professionals to politicians and/or the returning of political choices to the once professionalised and technicalised domains. The

current depoliticisation and repoliticisation are not always enforced by governments on people and individuals (top-down) through coercive measures. They can be multi-sources and multidirectional, started by any political agents from any political arenas and followed by other agents in other arenas. These types of depoliticisation and repoliticisation mainly operate through hegemony or soft power, though in some cases are still enforced by violence. Yet, this time the violence may come from societies or even individuals as political pressure.

Typically, the latest depoliticisation gains prominence in advanced democratic countries (the old and new empires) but it also resonates in relatively young democracies (post-colonial countries). As with nationalism, post-colonial countries, particularly the democratic ones such as India, South Korea, and Indonesia, appear to follow the depoliticisation trend in the empires. There is a significant amount of literature, particularly in Sociology, that links depoliticisation to neo-liberalism and/or neo-colonialism such as the works of Robert McChesney (2001), Hans-Martin Jaeger (2007), and John Roberts (2010). McChesney defines neoliberalism as “the set of national and international policies that call for business domination of all social affairs with minimal countervailing force” (2). To avoid internal crises, the old and new empires seek to open new markets in post-colonial countries. The soft depoliticisation in post-colonial countries is the latest weapon of the empires to re-colonise their former colonies because it can effectively overcome political resistance from local stakeholders and deregulate economic sectors. McChesney further describes how “the combination of neoliberalism and corporate media tends to promote a deep and profound depoliticisation” in post-colonial countries such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina (15). As with McChesney, Jaeger states that “practices of depoliticization are . . . part of the political logic of (neo-) liberal global governance” (257). He concludes that the emerging global civil society fails to promote “bottom-up politics to international decision making from outside formal political institutions” but actually depoliticises global relations and absorbs them into

the existing international system. Meanwhile, Roberts describes how international humanitarian programmes turn into a depoliticising tool in the post-colonial countries, that is, by neutralising the political struggles of the poor. As an integral part of neo-liberalism and/or neo-colonialism, depoliticisation and its theory should be a valuable addition to the field of post-colonial studies.

As suggested above, depoliticisation is not just a form of statecraft or a technique of governing people and individuals. As a matter of fact, that is merely one of the multiple faces of depoliticisation that have been identified by Matt Wood and Matthew Flinders in “Rethinking Depoliticisation: Beyond the Governmental” (2014). Governmental depoliticisation refers to “the withdrawal of politicians from the direct control of a vast range of functions, and the rise of technocratic forms of governance” (156). It focuses on “the transfer of issues from the governmental sphere to the public sphere through the delegation of those issues by politicians to arm’s length bodies, judicial structure or technocratic rule-based systems that limit discretion” (165). At best, governmental depoliticisation is the tip of an iceberg or a recognised symptom of deeper phenomena.

There is a range of cross-disciplinary literature that focuses on quite different, yet equally important, pressures in the wider public and private spheres of society. Wood and Flinders call those pressures “societal and discursive depoliticisation” (152). Lois Harder, in 1996, defines societal depoliticisation as “the process by which the social deliberation surrounding a political issue gradually erodes to the extent that . . . the existence of choices concerning that issue are no longer debated” (qtd. in Wood and Flinders 159). It also signifies the transition of issues from “the public sphere to the private sphere and focuses on the existence of choice, capacity deliberation and the shift towards individualised responses to collective social challenges” (165). Finally, this type of depoliticisation involves “the roles played by the media, special interest groups, and corporations in shifting issues off the

agenda of public deliberation” (152). “The ‘speech acts’ of individuals in the private and public arenas that make certain issues appear normal or natural” are called discursive depoliticisation (Wood and Flinders 152). This occurs when “the debate surrounding an issue becomes technocratic, managerial, or disciplined towards a single goal, and hence changed content” (161). It also refers to the transfer of issues by means of language and discourse from the private sphere to “the realm of necessity in which ‘things just happen’ and contingency is absent” (165).

Wood and Flinders argue that “any analysis of depoliticisation that focuses solely on institutions and a narrow concept of ‘the political’ will ultimately produce only largely cosmetic or shallow analyses” (152). Social and discursive acts frequently shape and reinforce institutional reforms and governmental decisions. The three faces of depoliticisation are fluid, interrelated, sometimes mutualistic, and at other times parasitic. In fact, as Greta Krippner (2011) contends, “another dimension of depoliticisation is concerned less with the social location of decisions than with their content” (146).

In “Depoliticisation: Principles, Tactics and Tools” (2006), Matthew Flinders and Jim Buller state that the theory of depoliticisation and repoliticisation has penetrated as many as 13 disciplines (294). The issue has evidently appeared in post-colonial studies, literary studies, and film studies, none of which make it into Flinders and Buller’s list. In addition to the fact that the list was created ten years ago, another possible reason for this exclusion is that the discussions of depoliticisation in those disciplines are rather implicit and sporadic. As far as the current study is concerned, there has not been a post-colonial film adaptation study that explicitly addresses the issues of depoliticisation and repoliticisation and/or explores their intricacies and complexities. A study of this topic might be found wanting not only in the particular subject of post-colonial film adaptation but also in the general field of post-colonial studies.

The most relevant category to the study of literature and film is perhaps the discursive type. First of all, it deals with “ideas and languages”, which are the main business of literature and film (Wood and Flinders 161). Second, discursive depoliticisation and repoliticisation concern with the speech acts or political acts of individuals, which automatically include those of authors and filmmakers. Third, literature and cinema are the time-proven media to express individual concerns as much as demoting them into normalcy or fate. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, they do not stand alone but interrelate with governmental and societal ones. Governmental and societal politics have traditionally served as the ‘contexts’ for the discursive practices in literary and filmic ‘texts’. In the following part, I will discuss the three faces of depoliticisation and repoliticisation and their interdependencies in a more detailed manner and relate them to specific Indonesian situations, literary works, and films.

Colin Hay, in *Why We Hate Politics* (2007), creates a mental model to reveal the interdependencies between the three primary forms of depoliticisation and repoliticisation (Fig. 6). This model represents the latest understanding of the nature of depoliticisation and repoliticisation, which involve not only the displacement and replacement of decisions from politicians, but also the exercise of power by non-politicians, including authors and filmmakers.

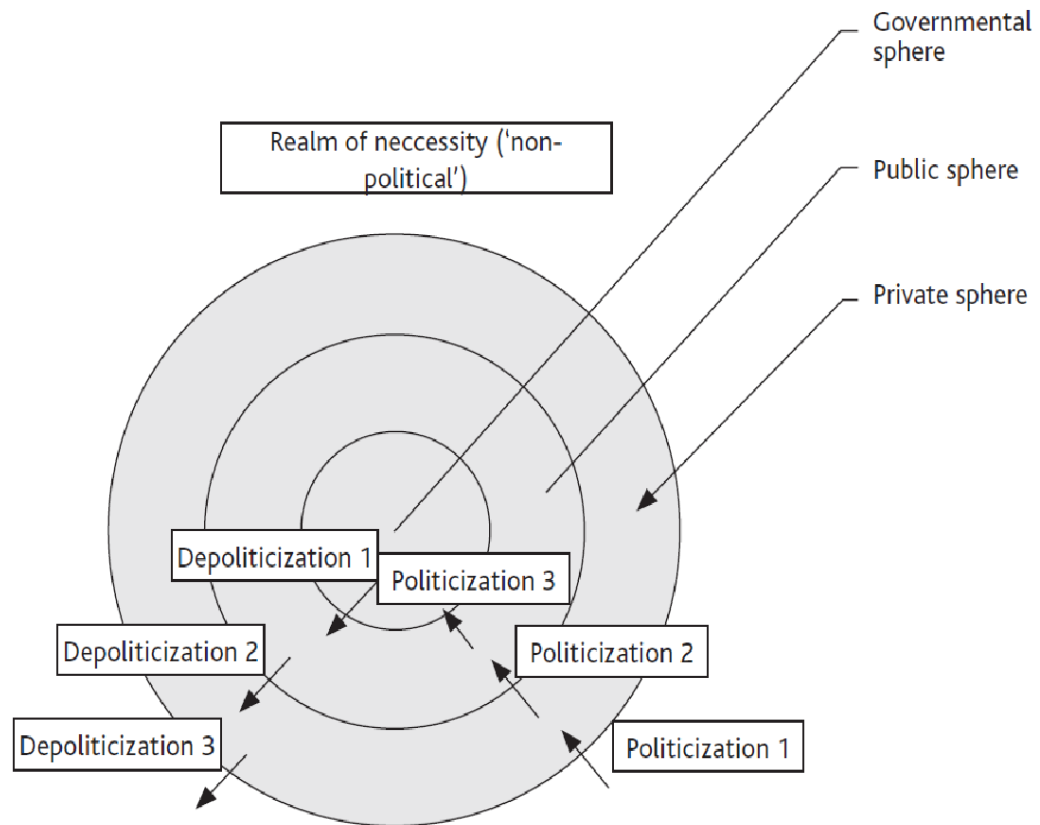


Fig. 6. Hay's model of depoliticisation and politicisation. Source: Hay 79.

The model above shows that both depoliticisation and repoliticisation operate as a mirror-image development across a political arena spectrum. The most basic form of politicisation involves promoting an issue from the realm of fate or necessity ("Politicization 1"). This may involve the questioning of religious taboos or sacrosanct cultural assumptions or the finding of scientific and technological research by individuals that were previously thought beyond human control. For example, a post-colonial Indonesian author begins to challenge the hegemonic notion that civilians are innately inferior and unable to lead themselves and are therefore naturally subjugated by the superior military forces. This issue becomes further politicised when it develops into a public issue of systemic injustice by the military through, for instance, consciousness-raising activities of pro-democracy activists or any other groups ("Politicization 2"). The issue eventually moves into the governmental

sphere as it becomes the focus of legislative debates, new laws, and governmental processes (“Politicization 3”).

According to Hay, depoliticisation is carried out mainly through a combination of delegation (“Depoliticization 1”), privatisation (“Depoliticization 2”), and denial (“Depoliticization 3”). Delegation refers to the transfer of functions away from elected politicians towards extra-governmental organisations. Political issues or functions are transferred to less obvious political actors. One of the best examples from the Indonesian post-military era was the transfer of broadcasting authority from government officers to independent professionals in the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in 2002. Privatisation involves “a function or issue being displaced from the public (non-governmental sphere) to the private sphere” (155). A social issue is demoted into a matter of private/consumer choice. In Indonesia, this has been widely represented by a growing discontent and unruliness among once-all-powerful soldiers, which the military consistently dismisses as individuals’ acts (see, for example, special reports by *Liputan 6*; *Kompas* “TNI”). Denial revolves around “placing issues back within the realm of fate, and in so doing denying the existence of contingency and choice” (155). It is best represented by the recent ‘overproduction’ of religious novels, TV series, and films in Indonesia. One of the common themes in those works is that bad individuals and bad actions will eventually be avenged by God, which reflects the frustrations of Indonesians with regard to the endless corruption, collusion, and nepotism despite the reforms.

Building on Hay’s model, Wood and Flinders offer an organising perspective of depoliticisation (and, correspondingly, repoliticisation) (Table 1). This perspective helps pull together an eclectic and often disconnected range of debates and publications on the subject.

Table 1

Wood and Flinders' Three Faces of Depoliticisation

Face	Hay-link	Essence	Conception of 'the political'	Act	Example	Actors	Key texts
Governmental	Type 1 Govt sphere to public (non-govt) sphere	'Weberian'	The state	DELEGATION of elected politicians from direct control	The hiving off of functions to arm's-length agencies, boards and commissions	Politicians	Burnham, 2001; Flinders and Buller, 2006
Societal	Type 2 Public (non-govt) sphere to private sphere	'Tocquevillian'	Public deliberation	PRIVATISATION of the issue or function from the (collective) public sphere to the (individualised) private sphere	An important political issue is displaced from the media news-cycle	Politicians and citizens	Brändström and Kuipers, 2003; Blühdorn, 2007
Discursive	Type 3 Private sphere to realm of necessity	'Gramscian'	Political agency	DENIAL of the capacity for control through 'speech acts'	Need to cut fiscal deficit presented as 'common sense'.	Anyone	Gamble, 2000; Jenkins, 2011

Source: Wood and Flinders 157.

The philosophical standpoint of governmental depoliticisation is Weberian in that it represents the spirit of Max Weber's legal-rational bureaucratic model. There are three categories of tools of governmental depoliticisation. The first tool is the creation of quasi-autonomous bodies (bodies, agencies, boards, and commissions) through which the decision making is placed at one remove, which has been discussed by, among others, Peter Burnham in 2001. Returning to the case of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, although this new body is meant to be independent from the interests of the government and capital, its commissioners are screened and appointed by the parliament. Political and business interests can therefore still influence this commission through their influences in the parliament.

The second tool refers to the introduction of new rules and regulations that are set to control the government's influences, as studied by Kenneth Dyson (2005) and John Hasnas (2008). In Indonesia's broadcasting case, it manifests in the amendment of Act No. 24 Year 1997 (the final year of the Suharto regime) and the introduction of Act No. 32 Year 2002. The new act explicitly forbids government officers, parliament members, and judicial members (the *trias politica*) from becoming commissioners of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission. The studies by Yannis Papadopoulos (2007) and Catherine Needham (2009) reveal the third tool, that is, the diffusion of responsibility across a range of interdependent actors as a way of blurring the accountability space and distancing their own personal responsibility. With the depoliticised broadcasting authority, it is harder to tell the real power behind the decisions of the commission.

The philosophy behind societal depoliticisation can be regarded as Tocquevillian because it deals with Alexis de Tocqueville's concept of engaged/disengaged and active/passive citizenship. Due to its wide scope, societal depoliticisation emerges within a range of disciplines and sub-fields beyond political science. Wood and Flinders have identified three major strands of societal depoliticisation and their corresponding strategies: the evolution, role, and capacity of political parties. Several studies, such as that by Richard Katz and Peter Mair (2009), reveal the narrowing in the base, scope and activity of political parties. Ingolfur Blühdorn, in "The Third Transformation of Democracy" (2007), argues that as societal depoliticisation emphasises efficiency, practice, and output, it tends to neglect many of the founding ideals and values that inspired the political organisations. In Indonesia's case, the first post-military election was fought by forty-eight political parties, which was a fantastic development compared to the three-party system during the military era. However, the winning parties have been gradually making it harder for smaller or new parties to participate in the subsequent elections. As a result, only twelve parties participated

in the last general election in 2014. The number of voters has also consistently declined except in the last election for a reason that correlates with ‘valence politics’.

The second and larger pool of literature on societal depoliticisation is concerned with political choices. Depoliticised political parties result in “valence politics, in which electoral decisions by the public are increasingly made not on the basis of different political ideologies, but on the assessment of individual and party competence vis-à-vis specific issues (notably the economy)” (Wood and Flinders 160). A depoliticised democracy is therefore a democracy without choices, in which the only decision revolves around who to elect to manage a predestined political project. Suk-Fang Sim (2006) and Ana Langer (2010) demonstrate how substantive policy debates have generally been replaced by personality-based debates, depoliticising policies while politicising persona. The latest example in Indonesia was the candidacy and eventual election of Joko Widodo as the sixth president of the nation in 2014. Jokowi’s popularity was far higher than that of his political party, and his candidacy was able not only to increase the vote to his party by thirty percent but also the total participation in the legislative election by four percent.

The third group refers to a more distinctive approach to the issue of societal depoliticisation, that is, the analysis of policy failures and blame games. Annika Brändström and Sanneke Kuipers, in “From Normal Incidents to Political Crises” (2003), state that actions and events in public space become politicised when powerful figures in the society successfully portray them as violations of important social values. Political interests increase depending upon the success of political actors to “name failures and assign blame” (280), and hence “politicise incidents as policy failures” (281). Correspondingly, the depoliticisation of political failures occurs when influential actors effectively define those events as a problem of the market or the private sphere. This type of societal depoliticisation sheds light on the growing influences of many Islamic fundamentalist groups in the Indonesian post-military

era. Whenever there are moral scandals in the society, these groups portray them as a serious violation of Islamic values and blame them on Liberalism, Communism, and/or Zionism. However, when their own members are involved in similar scandals, the groups attribute them to ‘irresponsible individuals’ and insist that they do not represent the groups (see, for example, Gatra; Kurniawan). A similar tactic has also been carried out by the military, which, although no longer in formal power, still wields extensive and strong influences in the country. The only difference is that the military blames social unrest consistently and particularly on “the latent danger of communism” (Sen, “Language” 210-1; Taufiqurrohman).

The philosophical spirit of discursive depoliticisation is identified as Gramscian because it emphasises radical thinking and the role of language and culture in relation to political debates. Analyses of discursive depoliticisation stemmed from radical theoretical literature during the post-Cold War period. Radical theories criticise how the dominant ‘anti-political’ culture transcends the existing political divisions, thereby creating the illusion of ‘consensus’. Scholars within this approach tend to be social and political theorists who challenge Francis Fukuyama’s theory of the end of history (1992) and attempt to highlight the continued existence of antagonism, conflict, difference and choice. This can be seen in the works of, to name a few, Juergen Habermas (1996), Pierre Bourdieu (2003), and Slavoj Žižek (2002).

The critical theorists are concerned with the fact that depoliticisation has successfully demonised politicians and political parties. It is easier to detect the interests of elected politicians and political parties than those of unelected professionals and technocrats. Professionals and technocrats, in good faith, may believe that they are neutral and following best practice in their respective fields whereas they may have been swayed by the dominant system and ideology. Furthermore, the critical theorists also analyse how language and a careful approach to the framing of issues can make any opposition seem irrational. In

contemporary Indonesia, the resistance towards the apolitical culture was carried out by a number of left-wing literary circles such as *Bumiputera* (The Indigenous), *Jaringan Kerja Kebudayaan Rakyat* (People's Culture Working Network), and Indoprogress. They jointly criticised the aesthetic hegemony of the late Cultural Manifesto and its contemporary ideological disciples such as *Teater Utan Kayu* (Utan Kayu Theatre), *Komunitas Salihara* (Salihara Community), and Freedom Institute (see Herlambang, *Kekerasan*).

There are at least three dominant strands of analysis in discursive depoliticisation and repoliticisation. The first and possibly most obvious strand is on the ideological content of political discourse and the use of technical or managerialist language and terminology to conceal or deny the subjectivity and contestability of political debates or decisions. This topic has been studied by, for example, Laura Jenkins in 2011. The second and related strand of research draws upon Habermas' problematisation of the use of scientific discourse and how expertise or scientifically determined solutions have changed the nature of public debate. Herbert Haines (1979), for instance, points out how drunkenness is now seen not as a social problem but as an illness or 'addiction' that can be treated using scientific treatments. At once a social problem is demoted to an individual problem, to be treated on a personal rather than collective level.

About Indonesian literature and film, this specific function has been performed much less by the use of science, as in the West, than religion. Trending religious novels and films regularly portray the rampant poverty or, in a more general sense, the widening gap between the haves and the have nots as a fate of individuals instead of a social injustice. This different condition might be caused by the fact that science has not penetrated and steered the society as significantly as religion. It should be mentioned here, however, that there are a few young Indonesian authors who have experimented with scientific discourses in their works, particularly Dee Lestari with her novel *Supernova: Kesatria, Putri, dan Bintang Jatuh*

(2001). Lestari's *Supernova* has been very well received by young readers, as shown not only by the publication of the four sequels but also by the adaptation of the first novel to a film in 2014.

In recent years, there has been a distinct pattern of discursive depoliticisation that tends to involve the identification of an existential threat that requires emergency executive powers. One of the most popular examples is the alleged existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which made America unilaterally go to war. When people accept this kind of securitising move, the issue is depoliticised and is considered a 'security' issue outside the rules of normal politics. This has become the main focus of the studies done by Thierry Balzacq (2008) and Mark Salter (2008). As such, security studies often regard the repoliticisation of an issue as a form of 'desecuritisation', which can be seen, for instance, in the work of Catarina Kinnvall and Paul Nesbitt-Larking (2010). Such an interpretation goes against the influential view of Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde in *Security* (1998), that securitisation represents a form of hyper-politicisation because it creates heightened public attention around a social issue. Wood and Flinders offer a way of reconciling these positions through the theory of moral panic and the concept of a 'folk devil'. The creation of an intense political controversy (that is, hyper-politicisation) is a way to impose a definitive position that closes down political debate (thereby depoliticising the issue). The most important insight from the securitisation debate is, however, "the manner in which the discursive depoliticisation must engage with different types of audience that each require a specific language type (generally identified as popular, elite, technocratic and scientific)" (Wood and Flinders 164). The depoliticising process of securitisation is rarely passive or static, but is generally a repetitive process between speaker and audience. This is relevant to most cases of discursive depoliticisation, including those in literature and films.

Issues of national security still exist in post-military Indonesian novels and films although they might not be as prevalent as in the past. The latest perceived security threats come from terrorism and local rebellions, particularly in West Papua. Although the military forces still treat terrorism and West Papua exclusively as security issues, the majority of scholars, novelists, and filmmakers have tried to see these issues and therefore politicise them as problems of structural and territorial injustice. Some of the repoliticised cinematic examples on West Papua are *Denias* (2006), *Melody Kota Rusa* (2010), and *Di Timur Matahari* (2012). The novels are *Mawar Hitam Tanpa Akar* (2007), *Dua Perempuan* (2013), and *Papua Berkisah* (2014). With regard to the social injustices behind terrorism, ex-combatants have produced, to name a few, *Demi Allah Aku Jadi Teroris* (2009), *Kabut Jihad* (2012), *Pedang Rasul* (2013). So far, no filmmaker has made a film based on this highly sensitive theme.

Based on the discussion of the theory and practices above, especially the discursive type of depoliticisation and repoliticisation, I propose the following working definition of the key concepts in the context of adaptation and this research. Depoliticisation can be understood as the use of various narrative and semiotic strategies to reinforce silence or particular representations in the informing texts and contexts and/or to suppress conflicts or new debates in the new media. Conversely, repoliticisation refers to the application of the textual strategies to break silence in the informing texts and contexts and/or create different representations of issues and characters and new debates in the new platforms. It should be noted that I use the plural form of text in the definitions because the adapted text is not necessarily the single source of material in the process of adaptation. As it should become clearer later, the second film adaptation of *The Dancer* also incorporates and repoliticises the military regime's propaganda film *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984). Likewise, the specific time and place in which the adaptation is produced are not always the only concern of

depoliticisation and repoliticisation. Chapter Three will reveal how the second film adaptation depoliticises both the Cultural Islamism of the military era and the post-Islamism of the post-military era. Therefore, context is also expressed in plural form in the definitions.

The theory of depoliticisation and repoliticisation, as just discussed, usefully serves as a general framework for the study of post-colonial situations and textual adaptations. It offers a general map on how the texts depoliticise or repoliticise issues as well as how they are being depoliticised and repoliticised by the respective governments, societies, and individuals. However, being a compilation of diverse studies in politics, this theory may not be specific/practical enough to operate on the textual level or, in the case of the current research, to analyse the literary and cinematic texts. The bridge and tool come from two renowned theorists in both political science and adaptation studies: Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. Not only do Foucault and Bourdieu provide the field-tested tools for analysing the texts, some of their works also relate closely to, and even inspire, the studies of post-colonial contexts.

Foucault's theory of discourse will be used extensively in this study because it helps define the discursive depoliticisation in the novel, screenplay, and film. It exposes in detail how certain issues are repressed and depoliticised in the texts by means of internal and/or external mechanisms. As stated earlier, the discursive face is the most relevant type of depoliticisation and repoliticisation in studies of literature and cinema. The term 'discursive' and its root concept of 'discourse' have been popularised by Foucault and his works. Deborah Lupton (1992) defines discourse as "a group of ideas or patterned way of thinking which can be identified in textual and verbal communications, and can also be located in wider social structures" (145). In turn, William Hanks, in 1996, construes discourse analysis as "the study of language produced in action", which is highly influenced by non-linguistic factors, not the language in isolation. There are several types of discourse analysis but, recently, two have

been most influential: Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). While CDA draws inferences from close attention to the structural and linguistic parts of texts, FDA does not pay as much attention to those attributes because, as Derek Hook (2001) states, it focuses on “what cannot be said” and “what is impossible or unreasonable within a certain discursive location” (12). Discourse analysis should not focus merely on “the search for a plenitude of meaning, but rather on a search for the scarcity of meaning, with what cannot be said, with what is impossible or unreasonable within a certain location” (12). The latter relates closely to the realm of necessity or fate in Hay’s model (Fig. 6) and Wood and Flinders’ organising perspective of depoliticisation and repoliticisation (Table 1).

In “The Order of Discourse” (1970), Foucault argues that the production of discourse in every society is selected, managed, and distributed through ‘inclusions’ (what is said) and ‘exclusions’ (what is not said). Here I argue that these key processes correspond to, respectively, politicisation and depoliticisation, as the former transfers an issue to the realm of deliberation while the latter to the realm of fate. Inclusion and exclusion are generally controlled by two sides, namely, the exterior (the society) and the interior (the discourse itself).

The external control includes prohibition, opposition between madness and reason, and division between truth and falsehood. Prohibition refers to “the taboo on the object of speech, and the ritual of circumstances of speech, and the privileged or exclusive right of the speaking subject” (Foucault, “Discourse” 52). It is probably the most obvious type of exclusion because, as Foucault states, “we know quite well that we do not have the right to say everything, that we cannot speak of just anything in any circumstances whatever, and that not everyone has the right to speak of anything whatever” (52). He further identifies politics

and sexuality as the regions where the social pressures of prohibition are most dominant. In his own words:

at the present time the regions where the grid is tightest, where the black squares are most numerous, are those of sexuality and politics; as if discourse, far from being that transparent or neutral element in which sexuality is disarmed and politics pacified, is in fact one of the places where sexuality and politics exercise in a privileged way some of their most formidable powers.

(52)

The next external discursive procedure is the opposition between madness and reason. Since the Middle Ages, Foucault says, “the madman has been the one whose discourse cannot have the same currency as others” (“Discourse” 53). His words are deemed “null and void, having neither truth nor importance, and worthless as evidence in law” (53). Conversely, the madman’s speech is attributed with strange powers: “the power of uttering a hidden truth, of telling the future, of seeing in all naivety what the others’ wisdom cannot perceive” (53). As Foucault outlines in *History of Madness* (1961), as the definition of madness has been constantly changing over time, the madman may refer or extend to anyone who does not conform with the established logic and common sense at a given time. One of the current examples of the madman is perhaps a rock star. He might be lauded for his ingenuity and imagination but at the same time he is not taken too seriously by the public, or at least not as seriously as men of science and men of politics.

The third external control is the division between truth and falsehood, which is no less historically constituted and ever shifting. It is a by-product of what Foucault called “the will to know” which is innate in human beings (“Discourse” 54). He points out how for centuries Western literature has grounded itself on constantly changing ‘true’ discourses. For the sixth-century Greek poets, for instance, a true discourse was:

. . . the one pronounced by men who spoke as of right and according to the required ritual; the discourse which dispensed justice and gave everyone his share; the discourse which in prophesying the future not only announced what was going to happen but helped to make it happen, carrying men's minds along with it and thus weaving itself into the fabric of destiny. (54)

Yet, just a century later, truth was “displaced from the ritualised, effective and just act of enunciation towards the utterance itself, its meaning, its form, its object, and its relation to its reference” (54). Fast forward to the modern era, modernism has promoted science with its rigorous methodology as the ultimate method to discriminate truth from falsehood. True discourses are thus those that ground themselves on the scientific language, which has been mentioned in the discussion of the second strand of discursive depoliticisation. Similarly, Edward Said observes, in 1983, that “[t]he will to exercise . . . control in society and history has also discovered a way to clothe, disguise, rarefy and wrap itself systematically in the language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian value, and knowledge” (*World* 216). The division between truth and falsehood also rests upon an institutional support; it is strengthened as well as renewed by institutional practices such as schooling, publishing, and professional associations.

As Foucault says, “discourses themselves exercise their own control; procedures which function rather as principles of classification, of ordering, of distribution” (“Discourse” 54). Commentary, author, and discipline are the internal mechanisms of discursive control. Paraphrasing Foucault, Hook defines commentary as “the discourses based on the major foundational narratives of a society and the interchange between these primary texts (foundational religious, juridical, literary, and scientific texts) and their derivatives” (9). Each form of commentary follows a simple guideline: “each gives the opportunity to say something other than the text itself, but on condition that it is the text itself which is uttered”

(Foucault, "Discourse" 58). Geoffrey Wagner identifies commentary, "where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect", as one of his three categories of adaptation (224).

The second internal control is the author, who Foucault unorthodoxly defines "not, of course in the sense of the speaking individual who pronounced or wrote a text, but in the sense of a principle of grouping of discourses, conceived as the unity and origin of their meanings, as the focus of their conference" ("Discourse" 58). Foucault is less interested in authors as 'special' individuals than what he calls "author-function" (59). Individual authors are not authorities who determine a discourse - they merely function to fulfil the needs of that discourse. He points out that there are many discourses that operate without deriving their value from their authors, such as everyday remarks, business contracts, and technical instructions. Even in discourses where it is a must to attribute things to authors such as science, philosophy, and literature, authors merely serve the discourses in different manners and roles. For example, starting from the seventeenth century, the function of scientific authors has been shifting from giving a guarantee of truthfulness only to "giv[ing] a name to a theorem, an effect, an example, a syndrome" ("Discourse" 58). In literary discourses, since the same era, authors have been asked to account for the unity, meanings, and connections of their writings (hence, forewords, opportunities to meet authors, and book events). In "What is an Author?" (1969), Foucault suggests to critical readers to enquire into not only what authors give to discourses but also what discourses give to authors; and, as importantly, not only what discourses get from authors but also what authors get from discourses.

Discipline is the last internal control of Foucauldian inclusion/exclusion. A proposition that does not conform to the internal requirements of a certain discipline will be marginalised or completely excluded from that discipline. In contrast, an idea that fits the requirements will be accepted in that discipline. For instance, from the seventeenth century,

for a proposition to belong to the botanical field, it must “deal with the visible structure of the plant, the system of its close and distant resemblances or the mechanism of its fluids” (Foucault, “Discourse” 60). The loose equivalent of discipline in literature and films might be found in the concept of ‘genre’. Although it entails complex and heavy requirements, discipline is “a principle which [is] itself relative and mobile; which permits construction” (59). To be accorded the status of a political film, in the past a film had to deal with political issues/events/figures and/or offer a different political line from the establishment whereas now any film can potentially be considered political.

Robert Young (1995) maintains that Foucault’s works have been a central theoretical point for post-colonial analyses. They provide the theoretical basis for the founding text of post-colonial theory: Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978). Inspired by Foucault, Said argues that Orientalism is a discursive construction rather than a body of objective scholarly knowledge. It is a form of ideological representation with an indistinct relation to the real cultures of the East, and is a system of knowledge about the East but in which the people are ironically never allowed or invited to speak. Foucault’s *History of Madness* serves as a founding analytical model for this discursive repression of the East. As he explains in *The Order of Things* (1966), “[t]he history of madness would be the history of the Other—of that which, for a given culture, is at once inferior and foreign, therefore to be excluded (so as to exorcise the interior danger) but by being shut away (in order to reduce its otherness)” (xxvi).

It must be noted here, however, that in *The History of Sexuality* (1976) Foucault grows wary about the over-application of inclusion/exclusion as a binary opposition.

Influenced by Jacques Derrida’s theory of Poststructuralism, he states:

We must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and

excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. (100)

Influenced by Foucault's new stance along with his own Derridian spirit, Homi Bhabha, in "The Other Questions" (1986), criticises Said's overreliance on the binary opposition between the East and the West as well as his attempts to introduce discourses that have been suppressed by Orientalism. For Bhabha and Foucault, the attempts constitute a conceptual error because every discourse carries its own destabilising power. In Foucault's words:

We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance, and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (*Sexuality* 101)

Just as hyperpoliticisation can precipitate depoliticisation, inclusion can become a starting point for exclusion. Furthermore, Foucault and Said also part company on the question of authors. Said, for example, takes the influence of individual authors far more seriously than Foucault. He believes that in the case of Orientalism, and "perhaps nowhere else", individual authors are not a mere vessel but the authority of the discourse (23). Individual explorers, social historians, philologists, and others who have written on the Oriental world, steer the discourse, deciding what is true or false.

Wood and Flinders' theory and Foucault's model resonate well in the field of adaptation studies, particularly in the work of Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2006). Juxtaposing the two textual processes, Sanders states that "an adaptation signals a relationship with an informing source text or original" while an appropriation does not

always indicate or acknowledge this (26). As Wagner suggests three broad categories of adaptation, namely transposition, commentary, and analogue, Sanders proposes two broad categories for appropriation, embedded text and sustained appropriation. Both adaptation and appropriation are parts of the important practice of intertextuality. The concept of intertextuality is naturally attributed to Julia Kristeva's "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1969), which has demonstrated that "all texts invoke and rework other texts in a rich and ever-evolving cultural mosaic" (Sanders 17). Adaptation and appropriation are also heavily influenced by theoretical movements such as Post-Structuralism, Post-Modernism, and Post-Colonialism.

In parallel to depoliticisation/repoliticisation and exclusion/inclusion, Sanders argues that adaptation and appropriation are "frequently, if not inevitably, political acts" (95). The academic studies of these processes have, in part, been encouraged by "the recognised ability of adaptation to respond or write back to an informing original from a new or revised political and cultural position, and by the capacity of appropriations to highlight troubling gaps, absences, and silences within the canonical texts to which they refer" (98). As discussed earlier, they are all the main concerns of the FDA. Furthermore, many appropriations have "a joint political and literary investment in giving voice to those characters or subject-positions they perceive to have been oppressed or repressed in the original" (98). With regard to Post-Colonialism, which is the concern of the current study, Gayatri Spivak argues, in 1990, that it is intrinsically appropriative because "in post-coloniality, every metropolitan definition is dislodged. The general mode for the post-colonial is citation, re-inscription, re-routing the historical" ("Reading" 41).

Using Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* (1986), Sanders demonstrates how appropriation can provide a non-white character from a canonical work of colonial literature with a powerful history and a voice. Rhys writes back to Charlotte Brontë's

Jane Eyre (1847) by giving a voice to and telling the story of Bertha Rochester, the creole madwoman in the attic, who is suppressed in the original story. This writing back reveals that “for all the liberatory potential Brontë represents in her identity as a published female author, she remained in her political attitudes a product of an imperial culture” (Sanders 103).

Appropriating Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Coetzee is aware that history is often an imperial narrative in which the voices of those defeated by colonialism are frequently silenced. In *Foe*, he revisits the story of Friday, the Caribbean native, who shares that castaway experience but whose voice is entirely silenced in the original story. In contrast to Rhys’s desire to give Bertha a voice in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Coetzee maintains Friday’s silence until the end of his novel. In the ending of *Foe*, the narrator enters a London property and finds Foe, presumably dead, in a bed and Friday barely alive in an alcove. Pressing his ear close to the door, the narrator hears an inexplicable set of noises emanating from behind it: “From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island” (Coetzee 154). Friday now becomes “a semantic signifier of the island, and all that was suppressed, oppressed, or repressed in Defoe’s master text” (Sanders 112).

As Foucault’s 1978 study of the repressive Victorian discourse on sexuality indicates, the process of revisiting can be a potentially liberatory movement as well as merely recursive. In Sander’s words: “counter-discourses, in seeking to challenge the values on which a canon is established, cannot help but re-inscribe the canon” (105). Just as Post-Colonialism, by its very designation of being post-, depends on an understanding of the operations of colonialism to derive its full force as a movement, so *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* are forever tied to the texts they seek to rewrite. Yet, as these novels do this in new and critical ways, they have become canonical in their own right.

Sander’s division of adaptation and appropriation is based on degrees of intentionality or on the way a film presents itself. As the theory of depoliticisation has shown, there are

powerful factors other than simply individual novelists and filmmakers with political motivations. Additionally, as the current study will show, there is no reason why an adaptation cannot have what Sanders calls “the capacity of appropriations” or why an appropriation cannot perform “the recognised ability of adaptation” (98). Furthermore, as with many other post-colonial analyses, Sander’s post-colonialism seems to continue the homogenising, binary opposition of the East and West, which the current study wishes to avoid, if not challenge.

Although Bourdieu’s works are not widely revered in post-colonial studies, Julian Go in *Decolonizing Bourdieu* (2013) argues that his early work on Algeria entails “insights on the limits and promises of colonial reform, anticolonial revolution, and post-colonial liberation” (49). The works of Bourdieu that are most relevant to the discussion of depoliticisation and repoliticisation are “The Forms of Capital” (1983), *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), and *Firing Back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2* (2003). In “The Forms of Capital”, Bourdieu expands and revolutionises the concept of capital, which was traditionally understood and propagated by classic Marxist scholars as an economic power. He contends that it is not possible to grasp the constellation and mechanism of the world unless one understands capital in all its manifestations. Depending on the fields and transformations, capital can manifest itself in three basic ways:

as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, “Forms” 243)

Furthermore, cultural capital presents itself in three forms, the first of which is “the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” such as intelligence, knowledge, and skill (243). This cultural capital sometimes combines “the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition” (245). The second form is the objectified state, which usually manifests in cultural goods (such as paintings, books, dictionaries, and machines). The institutionalised state is the third type of cultural capital and traditionally refers to academic credentials as bestowed by academic institutions.

Cultural capital can further function as Bourdieu what calls “symbolic capital”, that is, it can be recognised as competence rather than capital in culture, with art collections and/or cultural foundations, as well as in social life, with generosity and gift. In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu expands his discussion of symbolic capital to the language field. He argues that linguistic utterances or expressions should be seen as the product of the relations between a “linguistic market” and “linguistic habitus” (37). When people use language in a certain manner, they deploy their accumulated linguistic resources (the linguistic habitus) and adjust their discourses to the demands of the society and market that are his audience (the linguistic market). Thus, every linguistic interaction, however private or unimportant it may appear, has the traces of the societal construction that it both represents and helps to reproduce.

Other forms of capital may be acquired through economic capital, but only after an enormous effort at transformation, which is required to create the kind of power that is effective in the new arena (Bourdieu, “Forms”). Indeed, there are many goods and services that money can easily buy. Others, however, can only be obtained through a social capital of relationships, which takes a subtle approach lest it is considered a false relationship. Different from economic exchange, social exchange is ambiguous, involving misrecognition of the true economic intent as well as self-deception. Conversions from one capital type to another

cannot be fully grasped unless two opposing but equally biased perspectives are overcome. The first view is “economism”, which believes that every type of capital is reducible to economic capital and tends to ignore the particularities of the other forms of capital (252). The second perspective is “semiologism (nowadays represented by structuralism, symbolic interactionism, or ethnomethodology), which reduces social relations to mere phenomena of communication” (253). Semiologism often overlooks the brutal fact that many actions, if not all, are motivated by economic interests.

The relevance of Bourdieu’s account of capital for the current study is particularly strong. For one thing, the theory of capital can help explain the underlying factors behind adaptation. Filmmakers often adapt literary works due to the cultural status of literature (cultural capital), economic rewards (economic capital), and social acceptance in cultural elites (social capital). More importantly, the transformation of one form of capital to another embodies and, therefore, helps clarify further the process of depoliticisation and repoliticisation. The conversion of economic capital to cultural capital, for example, is remarkably similar to the practice of depoliticisation. When economic capital transforms into cultural and, further, symbolic capital, it is no longer seen as capital (acquired, unnatural, transformative) but as competence (innate, natural, long-lasting). As far as the thesis is concerned, this sheds a light on the everlasting hegemony of the military in Indonesia and its cultural products (including film adaptations) in spite of the 1998 reform. Conversely, the conversion of cultural capital to economic capital frequently invites condemnation, criticism, and debates, which is the essence of repoliticisation, that is, “the re-emergence or intensification of friend-enemy conflicts” (Flinders and Wood 139). This helps explain the critical and commercial failure of overtly commercial adaptations of critically successful novels like *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*.

Finally, the theory of capital helps explain the socio-cultural elements in the stories themselves. It would be hard, for instance, for non-Japanese readers and audiences to understand fully the importance of the dancer, the head of the dancing troupe, the leader of the community in Japanese society without the assistance from this theory.

The theory of capital has inspired scholars of adaptation studies, although none, in my view, has discussed it comprehensively. Linda Hutcheon, in her seminal work *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), enlists cultural capital as one the four main motives for adaptation. In her own words: “given the perceived hierarchy of the arts and therefore media . . . one way to gain respectability or increase cultural capital is for an adaptation to be upwardly mobile” (91). Unfortunately, Hutcheon does not go further with the other types of capital and their conversions although they could have enlightened her discussion on both cultural capital and the other motives for adaptation. They could have explained, for instance, what she sees as “a sort of reverse form of cultural capital accreditation [in which] classical music performers sometimes aspire to become popular entertainers” (91). “The economic lures”, her first proposed motive for adaptation, are also closely related to economic capital as well as the conversion from cultural capital to economic capital (86).

Despite several differences, the three theories previously discussed are highly compatible and even complementary. As implied in his concept of author-function, Foucault is more interested in the question of ‘how’ power functions in the society and texts than that of ‘who’ has, gets, or uses the power. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), he argues that power is neither a possession nor a capacity of individuals or groups; it is not a commodity that can be bought and/or taken. Instead, it runs through the entire social organism and is exercised through extensive and productive networks. On the contrary, Wood and Flinders have shown that there are active, powerful agents who depoliticise or repoliticise an issue/function. Bourdieu’s theory describes several resources of power and at the same time reveals that

power can be possessed by individuals. However, these differences should be seen as a matter of focus. The three concepts are compatible because all of them operate far from the traditional concept of power by offering the microanalysis of power. Power is mutually seen as dispersed throughout all areas of life, not just economy and politics. As Douglas Kellner argues, “we are currently in a transitional non-synchronic social situation in which we live in many worlds at once, and thus need a multiplicity of viewpoints to make sense out of various domains of our social experience” (142). Therefore, sometimes we still encounter the accumulation and concealment of power, as Bourdieu as well as Wood and Flinders portray; “at other times we are confronted with the more subtle forms of disciplinary or normalising power or the panoptic powers of surveillance which Foucault describes so well” (142).

0.4 The Research

To sum up the whole discussion and at the same time provide a setting for the current research, this introduction has identified a series of shortcomings in the field of post-colonial film adaptation, namely the underrepresentation of non-British former colonies, the underexposure of domestic conflicts in post-colonial countries, and the absence of theoretical approaches to those tensions other than ‘the failure of nationalism’. To fill these gaps, the current study attempts to analyse the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in post-colonial Indonesian film adaptations, focusing primarily on *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* and *The Dancer*, the two adaptations of Ahmad Tohari’s novel *The Dancer*. In particular, the study aims to answer the following overarching questions:

1. What are depoliticised or politicised in the novel and adaptations? How are they done?
2. Why are they depoliticised or politicised?

3. Who are involved in the depoliticisation and politicisation in the texts? What do they gain or lose from them?
4. How do the readers/spectators respond to the depoliticisation and politicisation in the texts?

The questions above deal with, respectively, the texts, contexts, subjects, and readers/spectators of the novel and adaptations, following rather loosely the structure of analysis proposed by Linda Hutcheon (2006). The texts here include the content and the form of the novel and the adaptations or, to be more precise, their narratives and narrations, which Brian McFarlane (2007) defines, respectively, as “a series of events, sequentially and/or consequentially connected by virtue of their involving a continuing set of characters” and “all the means by which the narrative has been put before reader or viewer” (19). The contexts in this thesis cover the domestic and global political and economic situations, the literary/film communities and the religious/political groups, and the dominant ideologies and the influential novels/films during the military and post-military eras in Indonesia. The subjects represent not only the novelist and the filmmakers but also the producers, screenwriters, casts, and crew. Due to the time constraints for a proper study of reception and the lack of documented fan culture in Indonesian literature and cinema, the readers/spectators in this study refer mainly to the critical and academic audiences of the book and the films.

The research’s inclusion and expansion of the contexts and the subjects will draw attention to the rather neglected areas in most studies of film adaptation. As Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan state, in 2007:

extra-cinematic factors (current trends, historical events) are vital to film adaptations but are curiously absent from most studies of the subject.

Production values, technological changes, commercial considerations – in

short, the film and television industries themselves – are a sixth and vital dimension of literature on screen studies. (“Synoptic” 4)

A similar yet more optimistic call has been made by Cartmell in her latest article “Adaptation as Exploitation” (2017):

The most exciting work in adaptations studies, I believe, is taking a historical turn, looking at how adaptations are shaped by the period in which they are produced and how they define their audiences, through production, marketing and other commercial pressures.

To answer the research questions above, the study proposes the following research objectives: 1) to identify the discursive depoliticisation and politicisation in the novel and its adaptations; 2) to explore the contexts in which those works were respectively produced, in relation to the governmental, societal, and discursive depoliticisation and politicisation within and beyond the country; 3) to investigate the backgrounds of the subjects and their strategies in dealing with those external factors in the writing and production of the novel and the adaptations; and finally 4) to determine the impacts of the depoliticisation and politicisation on the readers and spectators.

In terms of contribution to knowledge, the study will give insight from a largely unknown former Dutch colony into post-colonial studies and demonstrate that ‘post-colonialism’ should not necessarily mean the overstretched conflict between the East and the West. It addresses the conflicts between the military and civil society and the longstanding issue of depoliticisation, which are prevalent in post-colonial nations but still lacking in post-colonial criticism. With regard to post-colonial adaptation, the thesis will deepen the understanding of the political dimensions of adaptations directed at non-Western consumers. Although this research is situated within the field of post-colonial adaptation, it also attempts to respond to the broader need for sensitive, multifaceted political approaches in adaptation

studies. In addition to the theory of depoliticisation and repoliticisation, the study is supported by the Foucauldian principle of discourse and the Bourdieusian account of capitals. Indeed, depoliticisation, repression, and capital have been mentioned in passing, separately, and respectively by Krishna Sen, Linda Hutcheon, and Julie Sanders in their politically-charged works but they are all not yet explored in a thorough, unified manner. The integration of these transdisciplinary theories will contribute a dynamic and comprehensive political approach to film adaptations as it captures the discursive depoliticisation and politicisation in the texts as well as the interrelated governmental, societal, and personal factors in adaptation. Finally, the inclusion of the transcultural elements in this study of Indonesian adaptations (as indicated by the phrase “beyond the country” in one of the research objectives) will not only counterbalance the unwanted ultra-nationalistic sentiment but also enrich the discussion of the interaction between intracultural and intercultural elements and textual questions still wanting in the field of adaptation.

The thesis is divided into five chapters including the current Introduction which explores the various areas of critical work relevant to my investigation of depoliticisation and repoliticisation in post-colonial Indonesian adaptations and how my thesis will build upon them. The following chapters are structured by the texts and, therefore, chronologically: the novel (1982), the first adaptation (1983), and the second adaptation (2011). They respectively make Chapter One, Chapter Two, and Chapter Three. The reason why I structure them as such is that this thesis discusses three different media: a novel, a screenplay, and a film. It is not possible to discuss them all in one chapter using point-by-point comparison without sacrificing important elements unique to each medium. In addition, the chronological structure may help the readers to understand the historical contexts, which are no less central in this study, more easily.

Each chapter consists of two parts, that is, the exposition of the contexts and the analysis of the texts. Each part is equally examined from the point of view of depoliticisation and repoliticisation. The first parts rely heavily on the governmental, societal, and discursive depoliticisation and politicisation while the second mainly the discursive one. In most cases, the investigations of the contexts can be as extensive as the discussions of the texts as I am aware that that non-Indonesian readers, the target readers of this thesis, are still unfamiliar with the country and its literature and cinema. The contexts expositions generally consist of the general political and economic overviews, dominant discourses in literature and cinema, and influential literary/film institutions in the military and post-military eras. Typically, each text analysis takes into account the narrative and the narration of the text. They are further supported by the discussions of the subjects and specific contexts (reinforcement or supplement of what I already described earlier in the expositions of the contexts).

There are inevitable structural differences between one discussion of the contexts and another due to the data availability and institutional characteristics. I do not, for instance, discuss the literary institutions separately from the literary discourses in Chapter One because there is not much known about the former to deserve a specific section. The literary communities in Indonesia are far less official, regulated, and, therefore, documented than the film institutions. While I separate the discussions of the film institutions and cinematic discourses in Chapter Two, I deliberately merge them together in Chapter Three. As I managed to collect lots of research regarding the film institutions in the military era, I found just a few on the film organisations in the post-military period, possibly and understandably, because the period is now still on-going and the present-day film institutions are not as powerful as they used to be.

For the reasons of data availability, medium specificity, and effectiveness, the structural discrepancies between one text analysis and another are equally inescapable. While

I examine the narratives and narrations rather simultaneously in the analyses of the novel and the recovered screenplay, I discuss them consecutively in the analysis of the second film adaptation because the narration deals with lots of visual language, which will be overwhelming if discussed together with the narrative. Regarding the filmmakers and crew, I discuss them separately from the discussion of the famous second adaptation in Chapter Three but concurrently in Chapter Two because little is known regarding the people of the missing film. I conjoin the discussion of the novelist and the novel in Chapter One for a slightly different reason. This structure is far more effective because I can relate each unique element of the novel to the specific statement of the novelist. In Chapter One and Two, I add some specific background information directly into the discussion of the text and the writers. As the analyses of the film and filmmakers are already lengthy in Chapter Three, I present the specific contexts separately.

In a nutshell, Chapter One will investigate the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in Ahmad Tohari's novel *The Dancer*. The investigation will start from the political, economic, and aesthetic conditions during the military era (1966-98), that is, the military regime and its ideological apparatus enforced the traditional form of depoliticisation and repoliticisation in all sectors. Then, I will explore how the novelist skilfully incorporated both depoliticisation and repoliticisation in the novel and how he benefitted politically, culturally, and commercially from his strategies. Chapter Two will discuss the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in the screenplay of *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*, the first adaptation of the novel. I will start my analysis by examining the impacts of the political, commercial, and aesthetic demands in the military era on the contemporary film institutions and cinematic discourses. In addition, this chapter will suggest the relative position of film adaptations and adaptation studies in Indonesia and the reasons why *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* has been marginalised and forgotten, and is now missing. Having set the contexts, I will then analyse

how the screenwriters responded to those external pressures, including their use of what I call ‘double depoliticisation’ in the script. In Chapter Three, I will first survey the political, societal, and economic transformations in the post-military era (1998-present) and their influences on cinema, all of which began with a strong wave of repoliticisation but ended up with a new type of depoliticisation. I will then discuss the outward repoliticisation and the hidden depoliticisation in this film and trace them back to the internal factors of the filmmakers and crew and the external factors of the government, society, and Hollywood. The final chapter will draw upon the entire research, highlighting the original findings of the study and identifying its potential and limitations.

Chapter One

The Novel: “The upheaval . . . is narrated elsewhere”

As discussed in the Introduction, there have been several political readings of Ahmad Tohari’s novel *The Dancer* (for example, Foulcher; Hoadley; Hellwig). The common line in those studies is that they all believe that *The Dancer* is critical of the tragedy of 1965-6 and the rise of the military regime. One of the few dissenting voices comes from Roosa, who argues, in response to Hoadley’s book, that the novel is anti-communist and pictures the mass killings as an understandable measure of popular self-defence. Using the framework of depoliticisation and politicisation, I would argue that *The Dancer* is 1) critical but largely supportive of the military regime, 2) influenced in complex ways by other powers besides the government, and 3) more than a novel about the tragedy of 1965-6. I shall begin my argument by reviewing the political, economic, and aesthetic contexts in which the novel was written. Then, I shall explore how Tohari incorporates both politicisation and depoliticisation in the novel and how he negotiates his way through the pressures from the government, market, and communities.

1.1 Cold War, Military Regime, and Total Depoliticisation

In this section, I shall review the depoliticisation and politicisation during the military era, which serve as the contexts for the writing and publication of the novel. As an outline for the review, I shall use *Pancasila* or the Five Fundamental Principles of the nation. The first reason for this is that the military regime was built on a grand promise that it existed as a total correction towards the violation of these principles by the Sukarno regime. The new regime prided itself on implementing the Five Principles and the 1945 constitution (as its derivative) ‘*secara murni dan konsekuen*’ (purely and accordingly). The military’s depoliticisation and politicisation were mainly carried out under that pretext.

The Five Fundamental Principles are:

1. *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* (Belief in the One and Only God)
2. *Kemanusiaan yang adil dan beradab* (Just and civilized humanity)
3. *Persatuan Indonesia* (The unity of Indonesia)
4. *Kerakyatan yang dipimpin oleh hikmat kebijaksanaan dalam permusyawaratan perwakilan* (Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives)
5. *Keadilan sosial bagi seluruh rakyat Indonesia* (Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia)

Each of the principles refers to a specific area of state-subject affairs, respectively, religion, humanity, nationalism, democracy, and social justice. Each of the areas was largely freed from the social and individual deliberations, controlled in diverse manners by the military regime, and at times pulled into the realm of fate, leaving the social and private arenas thoroughly depoliticised. This fits Wood and Flinders’ description of traditional depoliticisation in which the government enforces “the denial of politics or the imposition of a specific (and highly politicised) model of statecraft” (136).



Fig. 7. President Sukarno and his successor General Suharto.

Belief in the One and Only God: To begin with, the military regime under General Suharto accused the Sukarno administration of betraying the first principle of belief in God because Sukarno allowed the existence and growth of the atheistic Indonesian Communist Party or the PKI. This was by far the most effective accusation that the military regime ever mounted against the Sukarno government and the PKI. As highlighted by Roosa in *Pretext for Mass Murder* (2006), in 1965 the PKI was the third largest communist party in the world after China and Russia and arguably the strongest and largest political party in Indonesia. If there was one reservation that religious Indonesians still had about the popular party, it was in regard to the party's atheistic ideology. The PKI understood this political liability only too well and consistently projected to the public its secularistic position. Its political opponents, including the army, however, regularly warned the public about the party's atheism.

When the army and religious organisations began eliminating the PKI after the allegedly communist-inspired coup on 01 October 1965, there were widespread rumours

about how the ‘ungodly’ Communists had tortured and killed the military generals (Heryanto, *Identity*). As reported by Hermawan Soelistyo in *Palu Arit di Ladang Tebu* (2003), the rumours were soon followed by allegations that religious leaders would be the next target, which immediately provoked the wrath of the religious society. With these rumours, the coup was no longer seen simply as a politico-military move but rather as a ‘satanic’ attack. The Communists were thus no longer treated as political actors but portrayed as the unbelievers or the enemies of God. Seeing how effectively this discursive depoliticisation turned people’s sympathy to antipathy, the military regime repeatedly used it to neutralise any left-wing tendencies throughout its rule with a high degree of success. So successful was it that this satanic association continues to this day and has arguably made the left-wing movements in Indonesia incapable of gaining popular support despite their initiatives in toppling Suharto.

In its thirty-two years of rule, the military regime effectively depoliticised existing religions by not allowing them to present themselves as a governmental model, political power, and, to some extent, private affair. Starting from 1966, every citizen was required to have a religious belief and forbidden not to have one. Even the freedom to have a religion was further depoliticised by the government in 1978 through the official acknowledgement of only five major religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. If people happened to have another belief other than one of these five, they were required to choose the ‘closest one’ for the official documentation. Therefore, there were many non-practising Muslims who called themselves *Muslim KTP* (the ID-card Muslims) and whom Clifford Geertz, in *The Religion of Java* (1976), famously calls *Islam Abangan* (the Red Muslims). At the same time, political parties were not allowed to state a particular religion as their political ideology. Even the Islamic *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan* (the United Development Party) did not use an Islamic name and state Islam as their official ideology. There was only one ideology for every party, that is, the state ideology of the Five Principles.

Literature was allowed and, to some extent, encouraged to deal with religious issues to counter the imagined danger of atheism. Yet, religion was not to be represented in literature as statecraft, a social force, or in some cases an individual choice. It was believed that to project one religion as a model of governance and/or a social power might provoke the other religions and jeopardise the imposed interreligious harmony. Religion was portrayed either as a private affair or a matter of fate. As a private matter, religious stories were to address only such themes as inner conflicts inside individuals regarding whether or not to carry out a forbidden act in a particular religion. As a result, the storylines of the religious literature at the time were rather formulaic and predictable. They normally told of a character who broke a religious creed, suffered consequences, and decided to repent. Many times, Satan appeared in this individual, spiritual battle, either as an evil whisperer in religious dramas or as a scary ghost in horror stories, conveniently pushing the individual affair to the supernatural realm.

There was a notable religious literary movement, comprised, in particular of poets, in the 1980s in the city of Yogyakarta, which Aprinus Salam, in 2004, calls ‘sufistic literature’. Sufism is the inner, mystical dimension of Islam as opposed to its outer, formal representation, which is probably best signified by the Wahabism of Saudi Arabia. Sufism and sufistic literature are as old as the presence of Islam itself in Indonesia, and the Yogyakarta sufistic literature was a revival of this mystical literary tradition (28). Salam argues that the sufistic literature, far from being escapist, was actually a political opposition towards both the government and the dominant literary groups in Jakarta. Yogyakarta has long been considered the centre of Javanese culture because there exists the last Javanese sultanate. While Jakarta epitomises republicanism, modernism, and cosmopolitanism, Yogyakarta represents monarchism, traditionalism, and localism. In addition, the sufistic literature resembles what Heryanto, in *State Terrorism and Political Identity in Indonesia*:

Fatally Belonging (2006, calls “hyper-obedience as subversion”, that is, when people obey the government to the extent that it embarrasses the latter (*State* 135-58). The poets followed the government’s depoliticisation of religion to such an extreme that it created a public awareness and discourse of the ridiculous extent of the government’s censorship.

Just and civilised humanity: Furthermore, the Suharto regime also accused the PKI of violating the second principle, “just and civilised humanity”. The torture and killing of the military generals by the accused communists again served as a grand example of this violation. So important was this narrative that in the early 1980s the regime instructed the film production of *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984), which graphically pictures the torture and killing of the generals (see also 2.1.2). The regime required every student to watch it in school or at a theatre (Heryanto, *State*). This film was also screened on all TV channels on 30 September every year until the collapse of the regime in 1998. According to a national survey cited by Heryanto, ninety seven percent of the respondents stated that they had watched the film and eighty seven percent stated that they had watched it more than once. Most believed that the story was largely faithful to historical fact.

Nevertheless, the military regime itself had a hard time covering its own violations of human rights. Whereas the killers of the army generals remain a mystery to this day, the killers of the accused communists bragged publicly about their actions mainly because they believed that it was a holy war against the unbelievers. The persecutions and killings did not stop with the accused communists. As Geoffrey Robinson records in “Rawan is as Rawan does” (1998), the New Order regime also put to death thousands of suspected rebels in Aceh (from 1976), East Timor (from 1975), and Papua (from 1971). Joshua Barker, in “State of Fear: Controlling the Criminal Contagion in Suharto's New Order” (1998), also reports that from 1983-5, the regime kidnapped, murdered, and publicly displayed thousands of suspected criminals without trial as a form of “shock therapy” (8). The army’s special forces kidnapped

and never released students and pro-democracy activists at the end of the military rule (1997-1998) (Kontras).

The regime usually justified its repression by politicising the actions of its victims and at the same time depoliticising its own reactions. It accused its victims of being *pihak-pihak yang tidak bertanggung jawab* (irresponsible political actors) who wished to destroy the stability of the nation. The regime also defended its killings in the name of objective law and order, which were simultaneously put in contrast with the subjective nature of politics. The rebels were militarily destroyed because it was against the law to demand a separation from the republic. It shot the suspected criminals without trial because they posed a threat to the order. All in all, they used what Wood and Flinders identify as ‘securitisation’, which is a distinct pattern of depoliticisation that tends to involve “the identification of an existential threat that requires emergency executive powers” (164).

Another strategy of the regime was to emphasise the importance of the ‘just’ and to discount the significance of ‘civilised’ humanity. Torture and killing could be justified so long as it was for a ‘just’ cause. What constituted justice was arbitrarily determined by the military regime. When it eventually allowed the teaching of human rights in schools and the establishment of the National Commission of Human Rights in the 1990s, the government ensured that the teaching and the Commission also paid attention to what it called *kewajiban asasi* (human obligations) (see Widjojo and Noorsalim). The regime claimed that western countries unjustly overemphasised human rights at the expense of human obligations. Accordingly, the regime justified its violations of human rights by claiming that the victims had betrayed their human obligations.

When it came to the literary field, the ruling ideology of the day was Liberal Humanism. This was a ‘repackaging’ of Universal Humanism that the anti-communist Cultural Manifesto group brought forward to challenge the Socialist Humanism of the left-

wing People's Culture Institute at the end of the Sukarno era (Kurniawan, *Pramoedya*).

Liberal Humanism claims that it does not subscribe to any religious or political school of thought, but to all humanity. This cultural philosophy was held either explicitly or implicitly by a number of literary groups and publications. The most influential ones were *Horison* Literary Magazine edited by a number of ex-Cultural Manifesto supporters, who dominated the literary scene from 1970-1980, and the *Kalam* Journal run by the Utan Kayu Community, which gained prominence in the 1990s (Herlambang, *Kekerasan*). The most dominant genres of expression at the time were surrealism and, later, (the revival of) realism (Foulcher). As Liberal Humanists, these groups, especially the Utan Kayu, were quite critical of the human rights violations of the military regime. Yet, they were later considered conciliationist and elitist by the returning right and left-wing groups because they seemed to deny the existence of the religious depoliticisation and class struggles in the military era.

The unity of Indonesia: A rather harder case for the military regime was to do with the violation of the third principle: "the unity of Indonesia". Inside and outside the country, Sukarno was always associated with his strong nationalism, which unfortunately earned him the nickname of 'Little Hitler'. Pramoedya Ananta Toer, in 1999, says that while the Dutch colonial government successfully united the archipelago administratively, Sukarno succeeded in making it one political entity almost without bloodshed (Ismail, Chamim, and Zulkifli). There were times when Sukarno had to send military forces to subdue separatist movements and maintain the territorial integrity of Indonesia (see Kartasasmita). These operations were not without atrocities but these were committed in the field by the military forces, and this made it awkward for the military regime to highlight the atrocities. Moreover, Suharto himself also sent troops to Aceh, Papua, and East Timor to pacify the separatist movements, which led to even greater atrocities. It should be noted here that, at least initially, the

occupation of Papua and East Timor by Indonesia was backed up by the American Empire and Australia in the interest of de-litigation (Vickers; Farid).

What the military did instead was to blame the economic failure of the Sukarno regime as the root cause of the rebellions (see Kartasasmita). By doing so, it rendered the rebellions against the Sukarno government understandable, if not commendable. It concealed the facts that most of the rebellions in the 1950s were financially and militarily supported by the old Dutch and the new American empires (Ricklefs). Not only did the military regime forgive the anti-Sukarno rebels, it also recruited their top leaders into the new government and placed them in key positions. The rebellions were thus seen as an economic necessity and therefore depoliticised. On the other hand, the military government politicised the rebellions during its own rule because it claimed that it had succeeded in making the country prosperous. Thus, the rebels did not have the same economic urgency and therefore the only reason they rebelled must have been political. As a matter of fact, all the rebellions during the military era were related to economic and cultural injustices that people outside Java, the ruling island, felt deeply (Robinson, "Rawan").

It was easier for the military regime to attack the PKI with this issue of unity because, aside from the killing of the military general in 1965, this party had been responsible for at least two major cases of rebellion since its birth. The first resurrection took place during the colonial era (1926) and was recorded in the history as the first modern rebellion against the Dutch colonial government. Normally, any kind of disobedience against the colonial government would have been deemed as a heroic activity by the Republic although it might have been very personal and even criminal by the colonial standard. Yet, the rebellion by the PKI against the colonial government was depicted by military historians Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, in 1993, not only as premature but also as disadvantageous because it provoked the colonial government to strangle the infant nationalist movement. The

second rebellion, the Madiun Affair of 1948, took place early in the Sukarno era. Being inconsistent, the military did not portray this as an economic necessity as it did with the other rebellions during the Sukarno era. The Madiun Affair was framed as a political and military betrayal to the young republic, which was still struggling against the return of the Dutch (see Kartasasmita).

The Suharto regime perceived and practised unity as synonymous with uniformity. Although it regularly invoked the national slogan *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, “Different but One”, the regime despised differences and worshipped one-ness. It virtually ‘uniformised’ all aspects of life, from the official interpretation of the Five Principles to the colour of students’ socks. Culturally, the regime forced the extremely diverse cultural backgrounds into one national culture. Niels Mulder, in *Inside Indonesian Society: Cultural Change in Java* (1996), observes that the imagined national culture was an assimilation of other cultures to the dominant Javanese culture or ‘Javanisation’. Java had become the centre of governance from the colonial era due to its strategic location and number of inhabitants, and the complexity of the society. Javanese people were the ruling officers from the colonial era, perhaps only second after the Dutch. They were among the first educated natives and were sent to other islands to fill colonial administrative positions. Sukarno and other founding fathers, many of whom were Javanese, tried to end this colonial practice: by choosing, for example, a variant of Malay, instead of Javanese, to be the national language of Indonesia (see Sneddon).

Suharto also came from a Javanese background and gained cultural capital by marrying a princess from the old Javanese kingdom of Mangkunegaran. Suharto disrupted the founding fathers’ initiatives of de-Javanisation by revitalising the colonial practice. He filled the bureaucracy and military forces with Javanese officers and modelled his governance on the Javanese leadership and philosophy (Mulder, *Inside*). He also sent not only Javanese officers to other islands but also hundreds of thousands of Javanese farmers under the

program of transmigration. Suharto also employed many Javanese symbols and terminologies for the state's programmes and ceremonies. The separatist movements outside Java were not provoked merely by the economic injustice but also by this perceived cultural hegemony. For many people outside Java, this was a new type of colonialism, a 'brown colonialism'.

The Javanisation also penetrated the realm of literature and the arts. Andries Teeuw, in *Modern Indonesian Literature* (1967), notes that during the colonial and Sukarno eras, the literary scene was dominated by authors and poets from Sumatra, the native speakers of Malay. Yet, Javanese men of letters began dominating the literary scene in the Suharto era due to their physical and philosophical proximity to the power centre as well as better access to education and resources. This resulted in the integration of Javanese vocabularies, styles, and stories in Indonesian literature (Teeuw). Ahmad Tohari, the author of *The Dancer*, is an excellent representative of this generation of authors. Another strategy of uniformisation in literature and the arts was the depoliticisation of literary and artistic communities through the formation of a single community of authors and artists from the national to the district levels. *Dewan Kesenian* (Board of Artists) received financial and other support from the government but also bore monitoring and interventions. The presence of other communities was discouraged, spied on, and even repressed by the regime and its apparatus.

Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives: The Suharto regime then strongly accused the Sukarno regime of violating the fourth principle: democracy. Following the failure of the parliamentary democracy (1950-9), Sukarno dissolved the parliament and created a provisional legislative body and a cabinet representing the diverse political orientations in Indonesia in 1959. Responding to the failure of the discharged parliament to create a new constitution, he also decreed a return to the 1945 constitution and reintroduced a stronger presidential system that he called a guided democracy. The guidance naturally came from Sukarno and his popular conceptions, which

he claimed to be legitimate interpretations of the Five Principles and the 1945 Constitution. It was held as a democracy because it involved all political parties and ideological streams in the parliament and the cabinet (Vickers). There was no general election and Sukarno was appointed president for life by the provisional parliament.

During the Suharto era, there was a general election every five years. Nonetheless, as described by Stefan Eklof, in *Power and Political Culture in Soeharto's Indonesia* (2003), the winning party and winning candidate had been structurally and systematically pre-designated and were made permanent for more than thirty years. In 1973, the regime forced the many political parties from the Sukarno era to merge into three parties: *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*, *Golongan Karya*, and *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia* (Indonesian Democratic Party). They respectively represented the Islamic supporters, the professionals, and the nationalists. The designated winner was *Golongan Karya*, which literally means 'a group of professionals'. This group of professionals officially claimed not to have any political ideology and interests but to be building the country professionally, bearing a strong resemblance to the societal depoliticisation of the political parties as identified by Katz and Mair as well as Blühdorn. The president was not elected directly by the people but by the parliament. There was no presidential candidate other than Suharto and all three parties unanimously elected him for six terms (32 years).

In the Suharto democracy, there was no such thing as an opposition party because this was condemned as a feature of western liberal democracy. The losers in the general elections were not to oppose but to help the winner because the country was like one big family, which is another example of the regime's obsession with one-ness. There was no such thing as voting in the parliament because that was also deemed a feature of western liberal democracy and against "the wisdom of deliberations among representatives". When conceived by the founding fathers, the principle was meant to encourage Indonesian subjects to 'strive' for a

consensus but the Suharto regime pushed it further by ‘requiring’ people to reach a consensus on any affairs (Vatikiotis). In short, the existence of political elections and parties was a mere tool to legitimise the military rule under Suharto. This was the Suharto-styled depoliticisation of the social arena.

On a personal level, individuals were discouraged from becoming formal members of a political party, particularly the two non-ruling parties. Although created and steered by the military regime, occasionally the parties harboured some individual dissenters. After the 1971 general election, the government formulated a political concept of a “floating mass” in which people were not committed to a political party but focused more on helping the regime develop the country (Vatikiotis 94; Eklof 54). Individuals, including authors, were to keep their political perspectives to themselves and not voice them publicly because they might cause social disorder. The print media were under the supervision of *Dewan Pers* (the Board of Press) and the control of *Departemen Penerangan* (the Department of Information). Literary works were monitored and controlled directly by *Kejaksaan Agung* (the Office of the Attorney General). Editors in media and publishing houses ensured that writers would not challenge the government’s politics, or at least not explicitly. Usually, writers would self-censor their works so as not to provoke trouble with their media/publishers and the government.

Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia: The last violation that the military regime accused the Sukarno regime of was social justice. Sukarno and his government were proud socialists. In the final years of the Sukarno regime (1958-1965), western companies and capitals, especially those that were Dutch-owned, were nationalised and the government started to launch a socialistic land reform (Ricklefs). This programme was naturally supported by the PKI but opposed by the western powers. During the Sukarno era, western media regularly juxtaposed the poverty of common people and the mega projects and the

dandy lifestyle of Sukarno. In his 1965 autobiography, Sukarno claimed that the projects and his lifestyle were to bluff and deter the colonial and neo-colonial powers from attacking the country as well as to give Indonesians pride. Suharto never explicitly accused Sukarno of personal corruption because the latter apparently left only modest wealth to his family. Yet, Suharto, in his autobiography *My Thoughts, Words, and Deeds* (1991), implies and dismisses it at the same time by uttering an apologetic Javanese saying “*mikul dhuwur, mendem jero*” (lift the good deeds, bury the bad deeds).

In contrast, the Suharto regime was pro-market or, more precisely, pro his cronies, although the regime officially stated that it wisely combined the virtues of both a market and a guided economy. Continuing in what was now a familiar pattern, it called this hybrid economic system the Five Principles economy. Unlike a pure market economy, the regime provided subsidies and protection for people, particularly for their basic needs. Nevertheless, the subsidies and protection were not purely used for the benefit of the people but for pre-empting political protests (Vatikiotis). The subsidies were widely corrupted by government officers and politicians at virtually every level of governance. Another dark side of the Pancasila economy was that it enabled Suharto to extort investors and private businesses for his family, military, and cronies. In the name of nationalism, foreign investors were required to recruit local partners, who were none other than his family and cronies. The military forces were legally permitted to have businesses with the excuse of improving the welfare of the soldiers. As the economy was growing significantly, the disparity between the rich and the poor was also widening substantially.

The military regime denied the irreconcilable political and economic interests of the bourgeoisie and the workers. Continuing its obsession with unity, the regime denied the existence of classes and class struggles and stated that they were all members of the same family and must help each other. Metaphorically, the government was the parents, the

business owners were the older children, and the workers were the younger children. However, the older siblings apparently exploited the younger siblings, not only with indifference to, or permission from, the parents but also with their active help. Whenever the younger children protested to the older children, the parents punished the former. Thus, in many respects this economic perspective resembled Adolf Hitler's belief about classless working relations.

In the heyday of the regime (1970s-1980s), social injustices went relatively unchecked by the literature. Herlambang, in his 2014 interview, argues that there were only three authors who filled the gap, Yudistira Ardi Nugraha, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, and Ahmad Tohari ("Salihara"). In the early 1990s, the print media began criticising the government albeit very implicitly (Heryanto, *State*). The government's reaction was as expected; it banned three magazines *Tempo*, *Detik*, and *Editor* all at once. Unprecedentedly, the media this time fought back by filing a lawsuit against the government, and there were solidarity strikes by journalists throughout the country. Although the lawsuit failed, this case led to the establishment of *Aliansi Jurnalis Independen* (the Alliance of Independent Journalists) as a counter organisation towards the state's *Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia* (the Indonesian Journalist Organisation), which supported censorship. Seno Gumira Ajidarma, a renowned literary author and journalist, made a famous manifesto: "when journalism silenced, literature speaks!" This manifesto coincided with if not sparked the return of resistance literature in the country. One of the notable figures was a legendary poet Wiji Thukul, who was kidnapped and even now has not been found (2017).

In this sub-chapter, I have reviewed the depoliticisation and politicisation during the Suharto era, which served as the context for the writing and publication of *The Dancer*. The regime and its repressive and ideological apparatus surrounded, deterred, and influenced many of the affairs of the citizens, including the creative process of literary workers.

However, rather than being passive victims, literary authors helped, ignored, and at times fought back, as Ahmad Tohari did with *The Dancer*.

1.2 *The Dancer* the Novel: Religions, Politics, and Professionalism

This sub-chapter will present a political reading of Ahmad Tohari's trilogy *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* and its English translation *The Dancer*. The primary aim of this analysis is to explore how the contexts, as exposed in the previous sub-chapter, interact with the narrative and language of *The Dancer*. *The Dancer* is less a story of an oppressed victim than a narrative of power relations and capital between Srintil and the powerful. What I mean by the powerful here are the groups that Srintil encounters in the story, that is, the community of belief, the political party, and the civilian/military professionals. With the military professionals being omnipresent, the other three groups interact with Srintil in the three parts of the novel, respectively, "*Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk*" ("The Dancer of Paruk Village"), "*Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari*" ("A Shooting Star at Dawn"), and "*Jantera Bianglala*" ("The Rainbow's Arc"). The power relations in the text signify those between the author, government, market, and communities in the Suharto era. Those relations influence the depoliticisation/repoliticisation of certain discourses in the text, namely, religion, politics, and professionalism.

1.2.1 *The Dancer* and the Cultural Islam

In "The Dancer of Paruk Village", Srintil is closely involved in power relations with her own community in Paruk village. The type of power that the community exerts is what Pierre Bourdieu calls "cultural capital", which signifies "long lasting dispositions of the mind and the body" (the embodied state), "cultural goods" (the objectified state), and "educational qualifications" (the institutionalised state) ("Forms" 243). In *The Dancer*, the cultural capital is embodied by the elders of the community with their mastery of local traditions and rituals.

The first elders are Kartareja and his wife, who are introduced in the early part of the novel as “*dukun ronggeng*”, the leaders of the dancing troupe (Tohari, *Ronggeng* 16). Kartareja possesses what Bourdieu identifies as “the embodied cultural capital . . . [which] combines the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition” (“Forms” 245). He is believed to have the ability to talk with the spirit of Ki Secamenggala, a former bandit and the first patriarch of the village, and this kind of quality is seen as ‘innate’ in Javanese society (Magnis-Suseno). Nonetheless, due to his long experience, he also acquires the more profane skills to train and manage a ronggeng. A similar cultural capital resides in the hands of Srintil’s own grandfather Sakarya, a “*kamitua*” or the leader of the village (Tohari, *Ronggeng* 15). He is the direct descendant of Ki Secamenggala and inherits the leadership quality of the first patriarch. Yet, at the same time Sakarya has earned the respect of the villagers because of his long experience, knowledge, and sense of justice.



Fig. 8. A ronggeng troupe.

The politicisation of Kejawen: The elders control the tradition and rituals in Paruk village. It is the tradition in Paruk village to have a ronggeng and actively involve her in the cultural and spiritual life of the villagers. On the surface, a ronggeng is just a female entertainer who sings for, dances (and sometimes sleeps) with, and receives payment from her audience. On the other hand, the ronggeng occupies a central position in the spiritual life of Paruk (Tohari, *Dancer* 10-11). No ceremonies, for instance, can be considered spiritually acceptable without a performance by a ronggeng and her troupe since only a ronggeng dancing can satisfy the spirit of Ki Secamenggala. The fact that Paruk village is experiencing a long drought (and other misfortunes) is attributed to the patriarch's disappointment at the long absence of a ronggeng from his dominion. In addition, having a ronggeng can increase the socio-cultural prestige of a village in that region (11).

The problem is that the tradition dictates that the villagers cannot just appoint and train any girl to be a ronggeng. It is believed that a ronggeng is not made but chosen by *indang*, a blessing spirit. Little Srintil is believed to be possessed by the spirit for she can sing and dance without anyone teaching her (Tohari, *Dancer* 11). The tradition is reinforced by an elaborate set of rituals and ceremonies. To be a full ronggeng, Srintil must undergo three rituals: finding a ronggeng *kris*, a bathing ceremony, and a deflowering ceremony. Kris is a Javanese-styled dagger that does not really have a practical function in a real battle but has symbolic and spiritual power because it is normally made by a Javanese sage (Yuliandini par. 11). Srintil receives her kris from Rasus, her childhood boyfriend. It was previously owned by Rasus' father and, according to Kartareja and Sukarya, is part of the long-lost heritage of Paruk village. Thus, Srintil now has in her hand the precious objectified cultural capital of Paruk. It should be noted that she is portrayed in the novel as passively receiving the kris rather than actively searching it out. This underlines once again the effortlessness of the chosen one, which is central to the Javanese belief (Magnis-Suseno).

The second ceremony is a bathing ritual performed in front of the tomb of Ki Secamanggala. Its main purpose is to pay respect to the first ancestor of Paruk village. After the bathing has been completed, the village shaman Kartareja is possessed by what Sakarya claims to be the spirit of Ki Secamanggala. Accordingly, he declares to the spectators that Kartareja's possession is clear proof that the patriarch has given Srintil his blessings. What happens here is what Bourdieu describes as the hereditary transmission of embodied cultural capital:

. . . the initial accumulation of cultural capital, the precondition for the fast, easy accumulation of every kind of useful cultural capital, starts at the outset, without delay, without wasted time, only for the offspring of families endowed with strong cultural capital . . . It follows that the transmission of cultural capital is no doubt the best hidden form of hereditary transmission of capital.

(“Forms” 246)

As Srintil is Sakarya's only offspring being endowed with the strong cultural capital, it is easy for him to publicly legitimise her cultural capital through the possession. It is not revealed whether Kartareja merely pretends to prove Srintil's messianic credential. As Bourdieu says, the transformation of cultural capital regularly involves “self-deception” (“Forms” 252). There is a possibility that Sakarya and Kartareja are deceiving themselves due to the hegemony of the tradition to which they have been subjected.

The last ceremony is the ritual of *Buka Klambu*, which literally means ‘opening the curtain’. This is by far the most controversial ritual in the novel and it has received a great deal of attention from inside and outside the novel (see, for example, Al Ma'ruf; Hellwig; Hughes-Freeland). In this ritual, Mr. and Mrs. Kartareja publicly offer the virginity of the new ronggeng to anyone who can meet the set price of one gold coin, which is equal to the price of a fine water buffalo. As her boyfriend says: “Srintil was born as a ronggeng dancer, a

woman who was possessed by all men”, and the ritual symbolises Srintil’s total surrender to the public (Tohari, *Dancer* 51). There are two men who manage to meet the price, namely Dower and Sulam. Mrs. Kartareja tricks them, and each pays and thinks that he is the first to deflower Srintil. The Kartarejas effectively control and employ Srintil for their economic gain so that they have enough money to buy a rice field, which was the most important means of production in the then non-industrialised Javanese society. This ‘cashing in’ of cultural capital represents what Bourdieu calls “the transubstantiation whereby . . . cultural capital . . . is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital” (“Forms” 242).

Up to this point, the novel pictures Srintil as a passive and innocent object of the Paruk elders’ cultural power. Yet, the novel reveals that Little Srintil is genuinely happy and proud to be a *ronggeng* and never considers herself to have been abused and exploited. After all, she is seen as the saviour of the village and treated accordingly. Furthermore, this seemingly innocent young woman has cleverly given up her virginity to her boyfriend Rasus before she sleeps with Dower and Sulam. Therefore, not only does she deceive Sulam and Dower, but she also manipulates her grandfather and The Kartarejas. This event marks the beginning of her resistance towards her own community as well as showing another characteristic of power, that is, the power relation is consistently “multidirectional” (Kelly 37). It is not always top-down; it can flow from the bottom-up or even in any direction. Power relations are not necessarily about the powerful dominating the weak; they can be about the weak resisting and winning over the powerful.

Srintil’s resistance grows stronger as she realises her exploited state and at the same time her true power. She begins to understand that the village belongs to her as much as she belongs to them. Without her, Kartareja and Sakarya will lose their wealth and power over the community. So strong is the admiration of the Paruk women for Srintil that they compete to send their husbands to have sex with her because that may signify their husbands’ wealth

and virility. With this strong cultural capital, she does not, however, openly challenge the authority of the elders. Occasionally she just refuses to dance, which is her style of passive resistance. This is enough to set Kartareja, Sakarya, Paruk village, and other villages into a panic. As stated in the novel: “[t]o the disappointment of Mr. and Mrs. Kartareja, and especially of her sponsors, Srintil had already cancelled two dance performances, offering only a lame excuse: she felt lazy!” (Tohari, *Dancer* 123). This character development is a representative example of Foucault’s notion of the human individual as an active subject of power rather than a passive object of it. In *Power/Knowledge* (1980), he states:

But there is indeed always something in the social body, in classes, groups and individuals themselves which in some sense escapes relations of power, something which is by no means a docile or reactive primal matter, but rather a centrifugal movement, an inverse energy, a discharge. (137-8)

This also signifies one of the characteristics of power as extrapolated by Mark Kelly in *The Political Philosophy of Michel Foucault* (2009), which is that it is “not concentrated on a single individual or class” in a community (37). Power is decentred to the elders and the youth alike, the leaders as well as the dancer. Srintil’s story with the elders of Paruk further demonstrates that power is exerted and contested in daily mundane life. It does not have to manifest in a “social contract”, “law”, and the “penal system”, but it can occur in dancing, singing, and sex, as in Paruk (*Power* 140-141).

Through the story of Paruk, Tohari gives a voice to a repressed local belief and its community of believers in the public and governmental discourse at the time. The belief in question is a Javanese religion generally known as *Kejawen*, which Robert Cribb and Audrey Kahin, in 2004, define as “encompass[ing] many non-Islamic elements, especially mysticism and respect for local spirits” (1). It is still widely practised but seldom discussed in both arenas because, officially, it is not a ‘religion’ but a ‘belief’, which mean two different things

in Indonesia. A religion typically has a scripture and a rather strict organisation and occupies a higher position in the governmental and social arena, while a local belief only has oral teaching and a far looser organisation and occupies a lower position. As portrayed by Andrew Beatty in *Varieties of Javanese Religion* (1999), people inside and outside the Kejawen usually associate this belief with innocence and disinterestedness. In the novel, however, the Kejawen community is projected as a vibrant community with its sophisticated political manoeuvres. In other words, Tohari has repoliticised the long-depoliticised Javanese belief and its community.

Through the character of Srintil, Ahmad Tohari has given a voice to the triple repressed subject in the societal and governmental discourse. In addition to being a member of the 'backward' community of belief, she is a woman. In *Javanese Ethics and World-View: The Javanese Idea of the Good Life* (1997), Franz Magnis-Suseno contends that women occupy a third-class position in Javanese society after men and children. A woman from a backward community was thus in a much worse position than Indonesian women in general. Moreover, Srinthil is a prostitute among the female members of the backward community. There was therefore hardly a worse position in the social structure of Indonesian society than that of Srintil. Not only does the story of Srintil and her resistance give the triple repressed subject a voice, but it also subverts the triple repression altogether.

Paruk's politics generally revolves around the control over Srintil's sexuality, which constitutes the second discourse of importance in the trilogy. Paruk's sexuality is portrayed as being extremely different from the rest of the region and the country. Rasus, the second narrator of the first book, realises this difference when he moves out of the village and works at Dawuan Market:

I found out that the values of the wider world were not the same as those I had learned in Paruk. My experience with Siti would prove this. And Siti also

taught me, indirectly, that women were not best represented by someone like Srintil . . .

Every morning I waited on Siti, and had grown to like her. One time I couldn't stop my bold hand pulling away the veil that covered her head . . . Without hesitating, I pinched her white cheek.

I felt absolutely no shame at doing this. When I had lived in Paruk, pinching a girl's cheek wasn't by any means considered a social taboo, let alone a sin.

Even the word "sin" I learned only after I had left Paruk . . .

I was shocked when she ran off, throwing away the cassava she had bought.

(*Dancer* 87-8)

The values that Rasus talks about are apparently the village's free sexuality, which is an acceptance and a practice of sexual relations outside of marriage. Pre- and extramarital sexual relations are still a big taboo today, let alone in the 1960s (the setting of the novel) and the 1980s (the time when the novel was written). Rasus also realises that Srintil, with her free sexuality, is not an ideal type of woman, as he and the other Paruk villagers had thought thus far.

There are at least three sexual practices and beliefs of Paruk village that Rasus describes in *The Dancer*. First of all, Paruk is not against prostitution. As Rasus says about his own mother:

Momma was a woman of Paruk . . . So, Momma, like the women of Paruk, was not against prostitution. Although she lived only in my imagination, she was not really one of those pure women I read about in storybooks. Yet, because her womb once enveloped me, I could not bring myself to imagine Momma as the kind of woman who would be friendly with men, who would

not slap away the hands of a man who groped at her. No matter what, I still could not imagine that. (86-7)

In the passage above, not only does Rasus describe Paruk's attitude towards prostitution, but he also suspects his own mother of being a prostitute. The belief and practice of prostitution are naturally in direct conflict with the general teaching of Islam as represented by Dawuan Market. Textually speaking, although it does not apply in the Indonesian context, where the majority are moderate Muslims, prostitution in Islam is a crime punishable by death.

Second, the Paruk community challenges the common discourse on prostitutes as in the characterisation of Srintil. By common definition, Srintil can be easily considered a prostitute, since she sings, dances, and sleeps with men for money. Yet, as mentioned earlier, her position in Paruk is much more complex than that and to some extent even 'arcane'. For example, she does not always expect money for sex. As Rasus testifies:

During that year, Dawuan Market became an occasional rendezvous place for Srintil and me. Sometimes she would invite me to a house not far from the market. Although Srintil hated being called a prostitute, she nevertheless knew every house that could be rented for illicit behavior. She remained true to her words that she didn't expect money from me. (Tohari, *Dancer* 92)

It can naturally be argued that Srintil does not expect money because it is Rasus, the love of her life, who sleeps with her. Yet, the other passage shows that this is not the case. For Srintil, sex could be a 'social service' to the community and, therefore, could be free:

In Paruk, however, Srintil did not present a danger to domestic tranquillity. None of the married woman there felt threatened by her beauty. Perhaps they felt that they still had blood ties with her, being descendants of a common ancestor. Or, perhaps they were conscious of being connected by common, uniquely local, customs, and social norms. It was not unusual for a pregnant

woman, or a woman who had recently given birth, to tell her husband to ask a special favor from Srintil. A midwife often gave similar advice to the husband.

“Be careful not to have sex with your wife before a hundred days has passed after the birth. Ask Srintil to help you if you can’t hold out.” (246-7)

Prostitutes are generally considered a menace to the household as they separate husbands from their wives and fathers from their children. Yet, as the passage above informs us, those are not the qualities that the Paruk villagers see in prostitutes like Srintil. Srintil is an integral, necessary, and even welcome part of married life in the village.

Third, the village has known and practised for years so-called open marriage, which sociologists Curtis Bergstrand and Jennifer Williams, in 2000, define as “non-possessive love and tolerance of infidelity in their spouses” (par. 2). This phenomenon arose in the western world only after the sexual revolution of the 1960s. Yet, it has existed in Paruk from the days of its first patriarch, Ki Secamenggala. As reported by Rasus:

There, for example, a husband wouldn’t even get upset if he found his wife sleeping with his neighbor. The husband would know that the practical way of taking action was to go to the neighbor’s wife and sleep with her. All the problems would then be resolved!

Paruk, that tiny place of my birth, had given me a social understanding: but one without any morality. For instance, the fact that people did not know for sure which child belonged to whom never caused problems. I also knew of a treatment for childless women which was common in the village . . .

neighbor’s penis. And this treatment was, in the spirit of Ki Secamenggala, not considered taboo or even strange. (Tohari, *Dancer* 88).

Open marriage would be considered morally worse than prostitution in Islamic Indonesia because the latter could, supposedly, be kept separated from married life. The former brings

no separation as such because it operates exactly at the centre of married life. In addition, prostitutes are generally considered a hopelessly sinful class of women and therefore bear no moral expectation from society. Wives, on the contrary, are considered honourable women and the main pillar of Indonesian society. They are also mothers who are strongly expected to teach moral values to their children.

The representation of Paruk as a politically alive and sexually free community does not necessarily mean that Tohari condones this community of belief and its unique ways of life. As the following section will show, Tohari politicises Paruk's sexuality and the politics around it only to discredit them. By contrast, he offers a depoliticised side of the village and condones it. The politicisation and depoliticisation of Paruk reflect his idea of an ideal society: an apolitical but moral Islamic society.

The depoliticisation of Islam: Garcia notes that the recent objection aimed at the novel is less about its politics than its sexuality. The objection was provoked or at least coincides with the revival of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia after the collapse of the secular military regime in 1998 (Lysloff). Some Islamic people of Banyumas have expressed their objection towards Tohari's description of *ronggengs'* sexuality because they consider it a lie and an embarrassment to the region. Ironically, *The Dancer* has arguably suppressed free sexuality regardless of the objection from Islamic radicals. What the people criticise is actually the very sexuality that Tohari exposes to a certain extent only to reject it as a primitive belief and practice. In the Heideggerian tradition, this writing technique is known as "under erasure", which roughly means to manufacture and nurture a stigma so that it can be rejected (Heryanto, *Identity* 142).

Despite the general description of Paruk's free sexuality, there are hardly any explicit sexual scenes in the novel. The controversial Buka Klambu ceremony, for instance, culminates in the following asexual scene: "Later, Srintil told me that she was awakened by

Dower, huffing like a horny bull. She didn't say anything about the rape that followed, only commenting that the requirement to become the ronggeng of Paruk Village were truly harsh" (Tohari, *Dancer*. 78). The same textual repression also happens to Sulam, the other winner of Buka Klambu (80). It can naturally be argued that this is not a deliberate suppression because it is narratively logical that the female character fails to recall such a traumatic experience to Rasus, her lover. Nonetheless, Tohari does not picture any explicit sexual act either when it comes to the first sexual contact between Srintil and Rasus. Their relation is apparently based on mutual love and the two parties mutually consent to perform sexual intercourse. Moreover, it is their first lovemaking; writers would perceive it as a very romantic, fine material to highlight. Yet, the whole event takes place as follows:

I couldn't say a word. I felt a lump in my throat. Since it was dark, I couldn't see clearly, but I felt Srintil release her hold on me and was aware of her taking off her clothes.

It was not unlike my experience that afternoon in the cemetery. Only now something happened in the dark. I couldn't see Srintil's body, but I knew the moment she was naked.

I believe that one's sense of virtue changes in the dark. A person thinks more primitively when there is no daylight. And something primitive happened between Srintil and me there in the darkness. No vision of Momma appeared to me that time. Something profound happened during which Srintil and I were instructed by nature alone. It may have been that Srintil felt pleasure, but who knows? All I knew was that I had experienced something strange.

The experience didn't last very long. I helped Srintil dress, then I accompanied her to the door. Peering through the hole in the bamboo wall, I could see

Srintil open the mosquito netting and lay down to sleep. I went home with my heart in turmoil. (Tohari, *Dancer* 78)

It should be noted that at this point in the story Rasus, as a narrator, has not been enlightened by the new values from Dawuan Market. He is Rasus of Paruk village who he himself describes “one without morality” (88). It can be argued, however, that this is Rasus’ first experience of sexual intercourse and therefore it is logical that he finds it embarrassing to describe it in detail. Nonetheless, the next sexual encounter between Srintil and Rasus indicates the same sexual suppression. The whole of the sexual intercourse is reduced into one concise, symbolic statement “[t]hat night Srintil had sweated too much” (111). There are several other instances in which Tohari ‘teases’ and then skilfully avoids exposing the anticipated sexual acts.

In addition to suppressing the scenes altogether and using figurative language, there is another method that the author uses extensively throughout the novel: he makes the men unable or unwilling to perform sex. Once, Srintil is asked to be a *gowok*, “a woman hired by a father for his son when he reached a marriageable age” (Tohari, *Dancer* 218). The most important duty of a *gowok* is to prepare a young man so that he will not disgrace himself on his honeymoon. When Srintil serves as a *gowok* to Waras in the second part of the novel, it turns out that the young man is mentally challenged and completely innocent about sex (238-245). In the same part of the novel, Marsusi, her stubborn chaser, suddenly takes a pity on Srintil despite what he has done and been through to have a chance with her. Bajus, a man who offers her to his boss, is also told to be sexually impotent and all of a sudden his boss also takes pity on Srintil in the third part of the novel.

Finally, Paruk’s sexuality is treated as backward and inferior. Because of his different sexual values, Rasus receives reproaches and scorn from the society outside his native village. One example is as follows:

“Look around if you want to tease a girl, Rasus!” somebody else said. “This is a market. The women who come here to shop aren’t all from Paruk. Even a prostitute, if she’s not from Paruk, is going to get mad if you touch her cheek in front of a lot of people, even though she may only be pretending. Yet, that’s the way it is.” (Tohari, *Dancer* 88)

The attitude of Dawuan Market towards Paruk’s free sexuality reflects the Foucauldian exclusionary procedure of prohibition, as the former deems the latter “taboo on the object of speech” (Foucault, “Discourse” 52). By reporting the taboo, Tohari seems to challenge the external exclusionary force of the government and the society. Nevertheless, he merely shifts the problem to another Foucauldian arena, that is, the opposition between madness and reason, with Paruk representing the former and Dawuan the latter. It can even be said that Tohari exposes the taboo only to underline the madness of its practitioners.

The suppression of sex here might be influenced by the political pressure from the government and the socio-cultural demands of the predominantly Islamic society at the time. Ironically, the very act of presenting the free sexuality of Paruk, be it as a madness or a reason, made this novel very attractive to the sexually hungry market. In general, works with sexual content, no matter how implicit they are, sell well in the predominantly Muslim country, as is evident from the consistently high sales of sexual novels and films in the past and present (Heryanto, *Popular*). The liberal humanist literary circles found Tohari’s treatment of sexuality agreeable to their sexually liberal yet ‘anti-vulgar’ taste. All of these only confirm Foucault’s conclusion in *The History of Sexuality* that sexuality is a discourse of power and one that is never separated from politics. The supposedly personal matter has been very much regulated by different powers from time to time.

It is equally possible that the sexual suppression was motivated by Tohari’s own religious belief. As depicted in Rasus’ reflection at the end of the novel:

My little homeland had never really tried to develop its ability to reason and, as a result, it never knew that it could prevent the ringworms and lice from infesting its children, as well as the ignorance that perpetuated misery from generation to generation. Because it had never tried to develop its ability to reason, my village had never tried to find harmony with God. Like my mother, it remained asleep dreaming its naïve dream: naivete that gave birth to the tradition of ronggeng dancers. By itself, ronggeng would not be wrong if it were in line with the larger scheme of things. However, the ronggeng tradition that had developed in Paruk was one that exploited primitive desire. And because of that, it did not enjoy God's mercy. (Tohari, *Dancer* 451-2)

In this final paragraph, Tohari points out the differences between the local religion and his own belief. He sees that the sexuality concepts and practices of Paruk are not in "harmony with God" and "in line with the larger scheme of things" (452). Paruk's sexuality, as symbolised by its ronggeng tradition, is "one that exploited primitive desire"; it stands for nature rather than culture (452). Affirming the binary opposition of nature and culture, Tohari, however, challenges the modern antagonism between God and reason. He does not see God and reason as two antagonistic entities; in fact, they are in the same camp. He even sees reason as a valid medium to achieve harmony with God because God is the source of wisdom and, therefore, the creator of reason.

It is necessary to identify more precisely the author's religious belief and its relative position against the belief of the majority, the government's politics on religion, and the dominant literary circle's ideology. Ahmad Tohari was born and raised in Banyumas, Central Java. His physical existence and intellectual orientation were arguably far from Jakarta with its cultural hegemony. The closest orientation that he might have is towards Yogyakarta with its sufistic literature (see 1.1). Although in his study of the sufistic poets Salam does not

single out Tohari and his works, the Banyumas novelist fits easily into this group of poets, particularly in regard to their shared rejection of the modern and formal kind of Islam. In an interview with the English translator of *The Dancer*, Tohari explicitly expresses this rejection:

“I have serious reservations about religion being used as a model for social progress. From what I can see around me, it is obvious that religion has become little more than a system of laws. Meanwhile, the general understanding of religion is so shallow that its very essence is completely absent.

I advocate a return to the kind of Islam that was first brought to Indonesia, one that is inclusive, not just of a set of rules. Islam when it came here was not a commitment to formal procedures; instead, it emphasized ethical and moral teachings. The ancients who brought Islam to these shores put the ethical and moral at the forefront and made dogma and ritual duty secondary. This gets at the basis of my own ideas. I believe that I must establish an understanding of Islam that is holistic: one that embraces existing forms of culture. Not only should Islam tolerate these existing cultures but it should also nurture them.”

(Lysloff xi-ii)

Tohari calls his kind of Islam “a post-modern Islam” because he “advocates not the modernist orthodoxy of many Indonesian Muslims today but a more tolerant form that places an emphasis on moral and ethical behaviour over the formal aspects of Islamic practices” (x). However, Tohari’s post-modern Islam was stated after the collapse of the military regime and long after the writing of the novel. Thus, it did not necessarily inspire the novel. I argue that *The Dancer* was more inspired by the military era’s Traditionalist and/or Cultural Islam, which respectively refer to a religious practice and a political orientation but often represent

the same group of people. As defined by Marcus Mietzner in *Military Politics, Islam, and the State in Indonesia* (2009), traditionalist Islamists represent those who “often blend local influences into their religious practices leading to forms of syncretism that the modernists view as deviations from the true Islam”, while Cultural Islamists “appear [] to mark the departure from Islamic politics” (70). Local influences are certainly not the only influence in ‘loose’ Traditionalist Islam for there is also Sufism along with its syncretism with local mysticisms. The traditionalists used to be under the banner of political Islam but most of them have depoliticised themselves and, since the 1970s, they have co-founded Cultural Islam.

Theoretically, post-modern Islam is similar to, if not the same as, what Asef Bayat, in 2007, calls “post-Islamism”, which is “neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular” (19). While Islamism strives for the implementation of Islam in governmental and societal life, post-Islamism tends to promote the Islamic piety of individual Muslims. Traditionalist/Cultural Islam bears certain similarities with post-Islamism, particularly in regard to the rejection of Islamic politicisation but they also have at least one significant difference. Due to the political pressures of the Suharto regime as well as its own traditionalist nature, the former adopted a more essentialist position where they repressed their Islamic identity and focused on Islamic values. By contrast, post-Islamism pays a lot of attention to Islamic identity as opposed to the secularistic outlook of the late Suharto regime. Here one can find a parallel between Islamism and the governmental and societal politicisation of religion on the one hand, and between post-Islamism as well as Cultural Islam and the multi-level depoliticisation of religion on the other.

As a traditionalist, Tohari did not have any problems in using the story of the Kejawen community to instil his apolitical Islamic principles in spite their different identities. Through the characters of Srintil and Sakarya, Tohari powerfully propagates several sufistic

teachings such as predestination, moderation, and tolerance. The controversial concept of predestination is certainly in conflict with formal Islam, which believes in actively collecting *pahala* (rewards from Allah when one does good deeds) to save oneself from hell. All of the Paruk villagers, including Srintil, believe in the vanity of fighting against their predestined fate. As described by the narrator: “living in Paruk all her life had taught her that existence was like a shadow puppet tale; that humankind consisted of characters controlled by a puppeteer” (Tohari, *Dancer* 166). Srintil’s worldview is apparently inspired by the leader of the village, Sakarya:

If one was to live, one had to assume the role of a wayang puppet in a story whose plot has already been determined. This belief didn’t leave Sakarya for even a moment. To attempt to protect himself against an unhappy fate when the times were against him would be useless. Sakarya had lost not just his nerve; he believed that the power of the times couldn’t possibly be matched by the strength of the will of one individual. (264)

Second, *The Dancer* also promotes the sufistic principle of modesty and moderation. Living in modesty and doing everything in moderation are important in Islam and central to a sufistic life (Gulen). Using an extended metaphor, the omniscient narrator of *The Dancer* describes the upholding of this principle in Paruk:

Sakarya, the elder of the little hamlet, might have been the only person there who never stopped reading natural omens. From them he gathered that the days ahead would be savage. Days when people left their places of employment to gather in open fields. Days when roads would be filled with humanity, raising clenched fists and screaming shrilly. As the wind blew, it would lean to the south. When the wind stopped, the tree didn’t simply return to its upright position. Instead, it first swung back to the north. For Sakarya,

the jubilation outside of the village was a strong wind that was sweeping through their lives. Like the coconut tree, before their lives found their former calm, something else would happen first. (Tohari, *Dancer* 198)

In the excerpt above, Sakarya is describing the excessive politicisation of Paruk, as will be discussed in the following section. This excessive politicisation would soon bring an equally excessive depoliticisation. In addition, the metaphor above cements Sakarya's position as the main voice of Sufism in *The Dancer*. His words are always considered true and dutifully heeded by the villagers. Sakarya and his people might remind the readers of the Greek poets and society of the sixth century that Foucault describes in "The Order of Discourse". Sakarya achieves this 'discursive' domination through his active participation in Paruk's rituals in which he holds an influential position as the elder. Moreover, his words regularly carry a vision and help make it happen, as in the making of Srintil as a ronggeng. When his words are not heeded, he dispenses justice and gives everyone, including himself, a fair share. As Sakarya says when the persecution of the Communists is looming:

"I repeat what I said before. Everything we do in our lives must be with the bounds of appropriateness, because safety lies between two extremes. What we've been witnessing is a kind of life that is at one of these extremes, one that is not natural and has gone beyond acceptable limits. Such a life won't return to a balanced state without us first experiencing the consequences of its unnaturalness. My children, my grandchildren, we too have lost our way."
(Tohari, *Dancer* 260).

Finally, the novel also encourages the sufistic practice of tolerance in dealing with and helping people in error. This is the ethic behind the author's creative process and it partially explains why Tohari writes about and sympathises with the 'sinful' ronggeng despite his religiosity. As the omnipresent narrator says:

Historical evidence of compassion manifests itself through the wisdom of a simple people who often quote the traditional expression, “aja dumeh maring wong sing *kanggonan* [emphasis added] luput,” don’t look with contempt upon people ensnared in wrongdoing. (*Dancer* 330)

Tohari’s stance towards moral errors is essentially not a holier-than-thou, condescending one because, as just discussed, he believes in predestination. When an individual sins, it is beyond his or her own power. It is reflected by the Javanese word “*kanggonan*”, which means hosting a guest or an event, signalling that error is an external entity; that it comes from outside the person. Tohari thus rejects modern Islam’s notion of man as a subject who can determine his own life and future. He does not see the world with the modern lens of a binary opposition: right or wrong and holy or profane. Instead, Tohari sees each pair as merely two different manifestations of the same substance.

Not only does the Sufism dominate the religious discourse in Paruk, but it also effectively dominates the philosophical discourse in the first part of the novel. The reason for this discursive domination can be traced to the Foucauldian external inclusionary mechanism of “the opposition between true and false” (“Discourse” 54). Sakarya’s sufistic discourse is made dominant because it represents the truth held by the author, the Javanese as the dominant ethnic group, as well as the Cultural Muslims as the religious majority in Indonesia. What is ‘false’ is political Islam and, as will be discussed in the next section, Communism. Furthermore, Sakarya’s prominence at the same time reflects the internal inclusionary mechanism of “commentary”, that is, “discourses based on the major foundational narratives of a society and the interchange between these primary texts (foundational religious, juridical, literary, and scientific texts) and their derivatives” (Hook 9). His discourse is covered intensely because it is based on *The Holy Quran* as the foundational religious book of the Indonesian Muslims.

Tohari's Sufism in *The Dancer* may indicate a strong other-worldly orientation. One might accuse it of being a form of escapism because this was a logical consequence of the limited political and artistic freedom. In this situation, many authors found a creative channel in the Sufi world. The government would not imprison them or ban their works because this literary orientation was certainly not atheistic. In addition, Sufism is a personal rather than a collective type of Islam so it did not endanger the military government, which happened to be hostile to both the right-wing Muslims and the Communists.

Furthermore, Tohari and his Sufism shared, if not supported, the interests of the government and the literary communities of Jakarta. *The Dancer* ideologically fits the government's contemporary programme of deradicalisation of formal and political Islam. In the 1980s, when *The Dancer* was written, there was a growing radicalisation of formal Islam as represented in the hijacking of Woyla (1981) and the bombing of Borobudur (1985). Cultural Islam, as advocated by Tohari, has been the strongest antithesis of the formal and political Islam in Indonesia. As can be deduced from the discussion above, political Islam is totally repressed in the novel. There is neither debate between sufistic Islam and political Islam nor a mouthpiece for the latter. In this respect, the liberal humanist literary circles did agree with the government and Tohari because highly political Islamic radicalism was naturally against the supposedly apolitical liberal humanism.

The textual operations above show that the inclusion of a discourse does not necessarily mean the politicisation of that discourse. Sakarya and his Sufism are included in the novel to reinforce the ongoing depoliticisation of Islam at the time rather than to challenge it. This is in line with Tohari's statement that Islam is "little more than a system of laws", which indicates governmental depoliticisation (Lysloff xi). He pushes the issue further by rejecting Islam as "a model for social progress", thus signifying a societal depoliticisation.

The author prefers the kind of Islam that “emphasized ethical and moral teachings” of individuals, which practically depoliticises the religion into a private domain (xi).

Nevertheless, Tohari’s Sufism at the same time represented a discursive challenge to the government and the liberal humanist literary circles of Jakarta. The sufistic mysticism was in direct contrast to the economic-oriented government. Tohari’s Sufism also portrays a post-colonial, traditional attitude that was in a sharp contrast to the surrealist, cosmopolitan spirit of the dominant liberal humanist literary circles at the time. In addition, it exists as an antidote towards the perceived excess of economic and cultural liberalism: free sexuality, which is also represented by Paruk.

1.2.2 *The Dancer and Military Politics*

The invitation to dance at the celebration of Independence Day marks the beginning of Srintil’s and Paruk village’s contact with the most controversial party in Indonesian history, the PKI. The party is personified by Bakar, “a man from Dawuan who was a very clever orator and always gave fiery speeches” (248). Bakar is apparently an educated person. Unlike the villagers, he accumulated his cultural capital from formal education institutions rather than hereditary traits and auto-didacticism. This institutionalised cultural capital is considered by Srintil and the Paruk elders to be superior to their own cultural capital, which makes them feel somewhat anxious when they meet and talk with Bakar (Tohari 248-50). As Bourdieu says of the autodidact in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979):

because he has not acquired his culture in the legitimate order established by the educational system, the autodidact constantly betrays, by his very anxiety about the right classification, the arbitrariness of his classifications and therefore of his knowledge—the collection of unstrung pearls, accumulated in the course of an uncharted exploration, unchecked by the institutionalized,

standardized stages and obstacles, the curricula and progressions which make scholastic culture a ranked and ranking set of interdependent levels and forms of knowledge. (328)

In addition, Bakar also holds and exerts social capital, which, according to Bourdieu, is:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital . . . they may also be socially instituted or guaranteed by the application of a common name (the name of a family, a class, or a tribe or of a school, a party, etc.). (“Forms” 247)

Bakar is a member of the PKI, which was “the largest party in Indonesia”, and is its regional leader in Dawuan district (Roosa, *Pretext* 207). As the strongest party in the country, the PKI enjoyed a close relation with the leftist President Sukarno and therefore the government’s bureaucracy at all levels. This is the very network that Bakar uses to seduce Srintil and the Paruk community to support the party.



Fig. 9. President Sukarno and D. N. Aidit, the leader of the PKI in a political rally.

The depoliticisation of the Communists: Srintil and her community need Bakar because, with his extensive network, he can make it possible for Srintil and her ronggeng troupe to perform regularly at the party's political rallies as well as the government's celebrations. Aside from the financial benefits, Srintil and the villagers of Paruk need that wide exposure to show other villages in the region that Paruk has a new ronggeng dancer. Bakar also showers Srintil and her ronggeng troupe with lavish gifts. To begin with, "Bakar presented Srintil and her troupe with the gift of a complete sound system, the first electronic equipment to enter Paruk Village, and it became a source of great pride among its inhabitants" (Tohari, *Dancer* 249). He also gives the ronggeng troupe complete outfits, as reported: "he had come to the hamlet with a fatherly attitude, giving them a sound system, even presented the musicians with complete outfits" (250). The complete sound system and outfits effectively put the ronggeng troupe of Paruk village far above the other troupes in the region and thus help to fulfil Paruk's collective aspiration to win back its socio-cultural

prestige. Srintil herself finds in Bakar “a perfect father figure. He was friendly, and seemed to understand many things, including her personal feelings” (248). This personal touch certainly fills a gap in the psyche of the fatherless dancer.

On the other hand, Bakar needs this traditional dancing troupe with its famous mascot Srintil to attract and gain support from the working class in Dawuan district. With her popularity and charisma, Srintil can easily gather a thousand people in a field to watch her dancing and, more importantly, to hear the party’s political speeches afterwards. As the narrator says: “all he wanted was to use Srintil and her troupe as a means to draw masses and, at the same time, to put him in a position of authority” (Tohari, *Dancer* 251). Thus, the party apparently exploits Srintil’s sexuality to achieve its political goal. This further shows that the PKI’s attitude towards sexuality is ambivalent, if not hypocritical. Exploiting female sexuality is naturally against every known principle of Communism.

The power relations between Srintil and Paruk village and Bakar appear to be mutual, if not equal. Nevertheless, as Foucault explicates in *Discipline and Punish* (1995), power relations are full of “instability” and “inversion” (27). The balance of power starts to swing in Bakar’s favour despite the impression that he spends a great deal more than Srintil and her ronggeng troupe can pay back. Yet, there lies Bakar’s ingenious strategy. He deliberately makes Srintil and Paruk unable to pay him back and therefore they fall into one of the strongest Javanese values: indebtedness (Magnis-Suseno). Despite Sakarya’s complaint, Srintil and the Paruk elders allow Bakar to include political slogans in Srintil’s songs and adorn each entrance to the village with party symbols. In addition, Srintil and the villagers are willing to modify their sacred ritual to please the philosophically materialist Bakar. It is the ritual of the ronggeng troupe to pray on stage for Ki Secamenggala’s blessing before they start a ronggeng performance. Bakar disagrees with this superstitious practice supposedly because it is the antithesis of materialism in which he believes. Srintil and the elders come up

with a solution: “There’s a way out of this though. What about this. Before we leave for a performance, let’s make the offerings here first. Or at the grave of Ki Secamenggala. I think it would do just as well” (Tohari, *Dancer* 250).

The villagers’ compromise accurately exemplifies Bourdieu’s transformation of economic capital to social capital, and the effect of this subtle strategy is profound. It is said that Srintil understands that her ronggeng performances are merely a sideshow to Bakar’s political rallies. The shows are always overcrowded but somewhat different; they are noisy but meaningless. However, “Srintil frequently wondered why all these new thoughts had come to her only at the time Bakar’s favours had accumulated to a point where she could not avoid feeling deeply indebted to the man” (Tohari, *Dancer* 253). Srintil also tries to resist Bakar’s power by refusing to dance, which is the same strategy she uses very effectively with the elders of Paruk. Yet, as the narrator points out, “once, she wanted to try refusing to perform at an event but, when Bakar’s envoy came to pick her up, she found she was unable to say anything. She could not bring herself to say no” (253). Bakar’s subtle domination is too difficult even for the already sophisticated Srintil to detect and match.

Nevertheless, the villagers’ ‘cultural adaptation’ also marks at least three aspects of power relations. First, power resides “in the interstices between individuals since if it resided in individuals, they would possess it” (Kelly 38). Even when Bakar appears to effectively control Srintil and Paruk village, power does not reside in him because Srintil and Paruk village still resist his power, albeit secretly. At the same time, it also confirms the second principle of power, that is, as Foucault famously says, “where there is power, there is resistance” (*Sexuality* 95). The adaptation constitutes a resistance because it resists the total control of the stronger power. Third, it also indicates that power is productive. Foucault suggests, in 1980, that one must go beyond the idea that power is oppression, because oppressive measures are also productive, causing new behaviours to emerge. Bakar’s

disagreement with the ritual on stage results in Srintil and the Paruk villagers' new cultural practice.

Nevertheless, Srintil and Paruk village eventually become one entity with the PKI due to Bakar's manipulation of the villagers' deeply sacred belief. He secretly has the tomb of Ki Secamenggala, the most respected site in Paruk, vandalised and destroyed. As described in the novel: "[n]ever before had the people of Paruk felt so deeply insulted. The hamlet was gloomy and quiet with restrained rage. The inhabitants were all of one mind, ready to pay back with interest the insult they had received" (Tohari, *Dancer* 257). Furthermore, Bakar also uses this incident to stir up political animosity between the villagers and his political enemy. He has a green hat, a political icon of *Nadhlatul Ulama*, the PKI's political competitor in Central and East Java, left near the vandalised tomb. This is enough to make the politically ignorant villagers of Paruk actively hate the Islamic party. Srintil and her ronggeng troupe, who begin to feel uncomfortable performing at the political rallies, now wholeheartedly give their consent to the red hats.

This last incident demonstrates further the complexity of the power relations in the society. It is complex because it involves a few parties (Srintil, the elders, Bakar, and *Nadhlatul Ulama*) rather than two binary forces. It has been discussed earlier how Srintil and the elders exert their cultural power over each other. This time, however, they exercise and eventually give up their power to Bakar. Together with Bakar, they then politically attack *Nadhlatul Ulama*. On the other hand, both *Nadhlatul Ulama* and the PKI oppose the 'superstition' of Srintil and the elders while at the same time the two political parties oppose each other on account of theism/atheism and land issues. As underlined by Foucault, power "circulates . . . or . . . functions in the form of a chain . . . and is employed and exercised through a netlike organisation" rather than working in a linear manner (*Power* 98).

Despite their initial resistance, Srintil and her community are gradually suppressed and depoliticised in the story of their contact with the party. They are not given as much political voice and power as in the first part of the novel. The villagers are portrayed as uncritical victims of the manipulation and propaganda of the PKI. The possibility that they are intellectually stimulated by and attracted to the programmes of the Communists is also thoroughly repressed whereas, as Rhoma Yuliantri dan Muhidin M. Dahlan reveal in *Lekra Tak Membakar Buku* (2008), many traditional performers at the time were very attracted to the progressive programmes of the PKI. The only possibility that is expressed is that they are just manipulated and deceived by the party. Gone are the sophisticated Paruk community and Srintil.

Tohari seems to give a voice to the then absolutely banned political party but, different from Srintil and her community, the PKI is given a strongly negative voice and role in the story. It is portrayed as a cunning political party, doing everything it can to achieve its political end. What is being expressed of the party in the novel is merely its manipulation and propaganda. *The Dancer* thus only reinforces what has been believed about the party and removes the possibility of new perspectives. Simultaneously, Tohari represses the PKI's critical discourses, which attracted millions of people to join its rank and file. For a novel considered 'political' by the public and scholars (see 0.2), *The Dancer* does not really offer markedly political discourses. It might be logical not to have them in the first part of the book because Srintil and the Paruk villagers have not yet encountered Bakar and the PKI but the two parties interact intensively and extensively in the second part. Curiously, the party itself is never named throughout the novel and is only distinguished by its attributes of "red hats, red banners, and red letters" (Tohari, *Dancer* 220).

The omniscient narrator, who does not show any inhibition in commenting on the characters and events in the first part, suddenly becomes less ‘talkative’. The only rather explicit political discourse in the novel is as follows:

On one occasion, a party organizer came to the village and handed out party posters. On them were pictures of what the man called “*the downtrodden proletariat*” [emphasis added].

At first Sakarya had been interested, because people who came to the village often mentioned the word “*proletariat*” [emphasis added], which he interpreted the word to mean “subjects”. Everyone in Paruk thought of themselves as subjects, but he became confused when the man began to speak of “*the miserable proletariat* [emphasis added] being victims of the evil oppressors”.

“Who are these ‘victims of the oppressors’,” he asked the man.

“You yourself, and all the inhabitants of this village,” the man answered.

“Your blood is being sucked dry so that all that’s left is what you see now: misery! On top of this you can add ignorance and all kinds of disease. It’s time for you to stand up with us.”

Wait a minute. You say we’re oppressed. Are you sure? We don’t feel oppressed. Honestly! We’ve always lived here peacefully. . .

“But who are these ‘oppressors’?”

“*The imperialists, capitalists, colonialists, and their lackeys* [emphasis added].

There’s no mistaking them.” (Tohari, *Dancer* 196-7)

The comparison between the English and Indonesian versions reveals that the latter is more politically repressed than the former. To start with, there is no explicit political jargon in the Indonesian dialogue. What Lysloff translates into “the downtrodden proletariat”,

“proletariat”, and “the miserable proletariat” (Tohari, *Dancer* 196) are actually two Indonesian lexical items of “*rakyat*” and “*rakyat yang tertindas*” in the original version (Tohari, *Ronggeng* 183). They respectively mean “people” and “oppressed people”, which do not actually carry Marxist connotations that are as strong as the English translations. The translator appears to highlight the Marxist discourse in the text for western readers, who are arguably more familiar with the jargon as well as the referents in their daily life.

The real-life PKI created other political jargon for the ‘imagined’ class they were fighting for. Other examples are ‘*proletar*’ (proletariat) and ‘*kominis*’ (communists); none of this jargon is mentioned by Tohari in the story. Only once does the PKI’s popular jargon ‘*buruh*’ (worker) appear in the novel but it is used as a verb that in Indonesian has a very general meaning (to work). However, when it comes to how the party refers to its enemies, the Indonesian version generously reproduces the jargon: “*kaum penindas, kaum imperialis, kapitalis, kolonialis, dan para kaki tangannya penindas*” (Tohari, *Ronggeng* 183), which respectively translate in the English version to “[t]he oppressors, imperialists, capitalists, colonialists, and their lackeys” (Tohari, *Dancer* 197). Thus, Tohari represses how the PKI represented itself and its imagined class but explicitly exposes how the party cursed its enemies. With this representation, the PKI emerges as a negative political force, the political party that constantly curses and blames others; not the one that can identify itself and its programmes. It offers noisy but empty propaganda but lacks genuine liberatory programmes for the masses.

A similar strategy is further applied when Tohari describes the political rallies and demonstrations of the PKI. There are five occasions on which he reports the rallies and demonstrations (*Dancer* 193-5, 201-3, 251-2, 253-4, and 258). Only once, however, does he explicitly express the contents and words of the speeches. Those contents and words are once again specific curses to the enemies of the party (202). In regard to other events, the speeches

are reported indirectly with the same dismissive manner that is used to describe Sakarya's first encounter with a man of the party. They are reported as "incomprehensible to the simple people from Paruk" or "difficult for simple villagers to understand" (251). In addition, Bakar, the orator, is portrayed as an ambitious man of politics, who "manipulates [people's] emotions" so as "to put him in a position of authority", which was how the Suharto regime typically depicted the Communists (251).

Tohari prefers to describe the atmosphere and effect of the speeches on the masses instead. The situations and outcomes are consistently portrayed as "noisy, unruly affairs" (*Dancer* 251). One example is as follows:

One night, after a rally in which she had danced, hundreds of the spectators went berserk. As if possessed, they rampaged through rice paddies, plundering the ripening crops. The situation became violent as the owners arrived to protect their fields. By the time the police had arrived, seven bodies lay on the ground covered in blood.

The first brawl was followed by a second a month later, and another the following month. During the third riot, the situation was particularly tense. It took place in the daytime, and involved hundreds of aggressors fighting the owners of fields. A full-scale war of hoes and sickles was avoided only because of the timely arrival of the police. (253-4)

In the passage above, the PKI's rallies are not only pictured as "noisy and unruly affairs" but also bloody and deadly. The party are called the "aggressors" while the owners are the rightful protectors of their own fields. The established class is also represented by the police, who are pictured as the saviour of the situations.

It is thus apparent that the novel represses the political discourse of the PKI and promotes the ruling discourse of the military. In other words, Tohari agrees with, if not

supports, the military politics *vis-à-vis* the subject of Communists and, further, political parties. On this account, this finding is in line with Roosa's allegation that:

All three authors [including Ahmad Tohari] were anti-communists whose writings tended to depict the communists as being aggressive, violent and irreligious in the years before 1965. These authors considered the mass killings and arrests in 1965-1966 as understandable, if excessive and gory, measures of popular self-defense. ("Indonesian" 685-6)

Repression of the communist discourses, as practised by Tohari, was not completely motivated by what Foucault identifies as the exclusionary procedure of "prohibition" because the novel was still legally published and the Communists still appear in the story ("Discourse" 52). It refers to another external exclusionary mechanism, "the opposition between madness and reason" (53). The Communists' speeches are portrayed as 'madness' while their enemies (the field owners and the policemen) are framed as 'reason'. By extension, the madness was further associated with mass politics and political parties in general, signifying the Suharto regime's suspicion towards both.

There are several possible explanations for the repression of the political discourses in the novel. First, Tohari might have been forced by the regime to do this because the latter was hypersensitive to political discourses in general and paranoid about the Communists in particular. This theory is supported by the fact that Tohari was interrogated by the military and some parts of the novel were censored. In addition, considering the dangerous atmosphere at the time, authors would consciously or unconsciously perform self-censorship to avoid future trouble with the government, which managed to ban about two thousand books (Stanley). It is also worth mentioning here that the regime exiled and impoverished the Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer for 14 years without trial for his writings, and imprisoned university students for photocopying his works (see Heryanto, *State*). The

political problems with the government could further manifest in economic difficulties because their books would be banned from the market. The threat of political imprisonment and economic impoverishment were effective in making most authors either treat political discourses implicitly or abandon them completely.

Nevertheless, there are several limitations to this theory. First of all, if Tohari was forced to repress Communism and the PKI in his novel, he should have restored and published the ‘unrepressed’ manuscript after the collapse of the military regime in 1998. Shortly after Suharto’s forced resignation, there was a period of euphoria in which the public sought anything banned or censored by the last regime, including novels (Garcia). Yet, as reported in *On the Record: Indonesian Literary Figures* (2004), Tohari only combined the trilogy into a single novel and added the censored pieces from the third part, “The Rainbow’s Arc”, which tells of the aftermath of the 1965-6 tragedy and has less to do with the PKI. Second, Tohari has never been allergic to the subject of politics and treats it quite explicitly in his other works. *The Dancer* is merely one of his many politically engaged novels. It is not the only novel in which Tohari deals with the subject matter of Communism, nor was it the first time he did so. In 1980, two years before the first publication of *The Dancer*, Tohari launched a novel entitled *Kubah* (*The Dome*, 1980), which mainly narrates the story of a repentant communist and exposes far more explicitly Communism and the PKI. Curiously, *Kubah* did not provoke the government to interrogate Tohari or censor the work; he even received an award from *Yayasan Buku Utama*, a government foundation for book publication.

Hitherto the strongest possibility is that Ahmad Tohari himself does not agree with Communism and the PKI. This is consistent with his theistic and non-materialistic belief, as I have discussed in the last section. Moreover, it is also in agreement with his own political manifesto:

I'm not a communist and I'm certainly not an atheist. Perhaps I am what you'd call a socialist, but one who honors humanistic liberalism, which is bound up in my sense of social responsibility.

My beliefs go back to childhood experience. I was born in a very poor agricultural community. There was no irrigation, no agricultural technology, no chemical additives for fertilizers, there was nothing. Farming depended entirely on rain fall and during times of drought many of my friends and neighbors suffered from malnutrition and its effects.

Fortunately, because my father worked for the government, my family had enough to eat, but many of my friends went hungry. And when I looked into their eyes, I saw a great wrong. I had to ask myself how this could be.

The answer I saw, could be traced to ignorance, which was frequently fostered by religious leaders who wrongly said that the poor had no work ethic. In fact, the problem was in the system of production. The agricultural system wasn't fair and the government administration was feudalistic. The factors combined to keep people poor. (Lysloff x-xi)

His socialist sympathy goes to the ignorance and poor being wrongly accused of and unfairly punished for Communism. It is evident that Tohari sympathises with Srintil and the Paruk community as innocently accused communists, but not with Bakar, as the conscious, self-confessed communist. The novel sees the Paruk villagers as the victims of the PKI, not its conscious supporters, which happened to be the political stance of the liberal humanist literary circles. Even Tohari, in the above quotation, identifies himself with the "humanistic liberalism". It is no wonder that *The Dancer* received critical acclaim from the literary communities at the time. Interestingly, the mere exposition of the Communists, be it negative or positive, also attracted the politically starved market of the Suharto era. Metaphorically,

reading *The Dancer* was like riding a roller coaster. There was an element of danger for the contemporary readers but they knew that it was safe.

The repression of the communist discourses was an area of convergence of Tohari's personal belief and the Suharto regime's ruling ideology. Nevertheless, I am not saying that the author was a passive object of the dominant ideology of the Suharto regime, nor do I wish to project Tohari as a lackey of the regime. Tohari obviously criticises the Suharto regime elsewhere, such as in *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak* (1986), *Belantik* (2001), and *Orang-orang Proyek* (2002). *The Dancer* also questions the hypocrisy of the civilian professional class as the important pillar of the regime, as the next section (1.2.3) will show.

The depoliticisation of the military: The PKI is not the only representative of Dawuan in the novel. Dawuan is also epitomised by the army, the historical arch enemy of the Communists, stationed in that city. If the party represents the negative side of Dawuan, the military stands for the positive face of the city. The main representative of the military is Rasus, who is originally a villager and Srintil's first love. Frustrated by the prospect that Srintil will give up her virginity in the Buka Klambu, Rasus runs away from Paruk village and works as an office boy at a local army base. There he befriends and wins the trust of Sergeant Slamet, who teaches him to read and eventually recruits him as a soldier.

While exposing the Communists' actions, *Tohari* represses the exploits of the military as the main pillar of the Suharto regime. The story of Rasus and Sergeant Slamet shows that, unlike the Communists, the military does not politicise and exploit the villagers but educates them. And what a fine man the military makes of Rasus! The novel is filled with Rasus' sophisticated reflections about himself and his surroundings. This can be seen from his reflection below:

The longer I lived away from my tiny homeland, the more I was able to *critically* [emphasis added] evaluate life in Paruk. I realized that the poverty

there was maintained in perpetuity by the ignorance and laziness of the inhabitants. They were satisfied with just being farm workers or with small-scale cultivation of cassava. Whenever there was a small harvest, liquor could be found in every home. The sounds of the calung ensemble and the singing of the ronggeng dancer were the lullabies of the people. Indeed, Sakarya had been correct when he said that, without calung and ronggeng, life was dreary for the people of Paruk. Calung and ronggeng performances also provided people with an opportunity to dance socially and drink *ciu* to their heart's content. (Tohari, *Dancer* 89)

Rasus' retrospective and critical discourse might remind readers of Marx's famous statements in "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1844):

The wretchedness of religion is at once an expression of and a protest against real wretchedness. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people. (131)

Ronggeng practically functions as a religion to Paruk village; it is said in the novel that the Paruk villagers do not follow any organised religion (Tohari, *Dancer* 252). Ronggeng, in Rasus' critical opinion, is "the lullabies of the people" or, in Marx's terminology, "the opium of the people"; it consoles as well as subdues the Paruk villagers. Another critical and historical reflection of the military man can also be found in the conclusion of the novel, as discussed in the last section.

Stylistically, Rasus frequently uses calques or loan translations, which are the Indonesian urbanites' way of signalling their high level of education. Calques and loan words come from many sources but, with the recent cultural hegemony of the English-speaking

countries, they have become increasingly English. Besides “critically” in the last passage, another example of Rasus’ calques can be found in the following reflection:

I stood near the front of the crowd, thinking. If there had been people in the village who could discuss things like artistic *appreciation* [emphasis added] or, even better, a means to evaluate it, whose *appreciation* [emphasis added] of Srintil’s performance would have been the most profound? I arrogantly believed that my admiration was the deepest. (Tohari, *Dancer* 47)

The calques in the original version are “kritis” and “apresiasi” (Tohari, *Ronggeng* 86; 47), which are respectively derived from the English words “critically” and “appreciation”, as emphasised above. Even in today’s democratic atmosphere those two words would still be exclusively used by Indonesians with at least a tertiary education. The words and the syntaxes are also, respectively, too low-frequency and complex for the uneducated Rasus.

The stylistic strategies above embody the Foucauldian opposition between truth and falsehood as well as discursive depoliticisation. As observed by Foucault, Wood and Flinders, and Said, modernism and modern subjects ascribe the ultimate truth to science and knowledge (see 0.3). Truthful discourses are those which ground themselves on scientific language or, in Rasus’ case, intellectual language. Rasus’ intellectual register signifies the truthfulness of his assertions and, by association, the military’s discourses. This truthfulness of assertions is supported by the exclusion of the military’s sexual abuse and atrocity.

In contrast to the PKI’s sexual exploitation for politics, the military is portrayed as asexual or, at worst, not sexually exploitative. There is no instance in which the military officers, except for Rasus, do anything related to sex and sexuality. That Rasus is an exceptional case is understandable because he is originally from the immoral village and therefore is pictured as more sexual than the other soldiers. Nevertheless, Rasus’ sexual immorality declines after his contact with the city and the military. As he gratefully admits:

“Dawuan Market provided me with wider horizons on many fronts. Previously, my only world had been Paruk with all its cursing and swearing, its poverty, and its sanctioned indecencies” (Tohari, *Dancer* 87). His moral restraint gets stronger after his appointment as a military officer. Although he still has sex with Srintil once after the appointment, this is done out of love rather than lust or political motivation. In his next meeting with Srintil, Rasus rejects her altogether:

“The problem is that, until now, I hadn’t even thought about marriage or about whom I might marry. Not even about you, Srin. I only just learned that you’d returned when Sakum told me this morning.”

“I never dreamed to presume that I’d be the reason for your coming back here. This, here, means nothing to you.”

“Ah, Srin. You really needn’t talk like that. Time have changed. Let’s leave the past alone. We should be happy with the way things are. We’re safe and we’re back home, both of us. Now, Srin, I’d like to take my leave. I haven’t bathed since yesterday afternoon.” (390)

Last but certainly not least, *The Dancer* also suppresses the persecution and killing of the suspected communists by the military, which is supposed to take place in the second part of the novel. For a novel that is regularly related to the event and was made famous by this association, *The Dancer*, curiously, does not say much about the massacre of the Communists. Out of the three parts and 478 pages of the novel, Tohari devotes only a few pages to the event and narrates the persecution and killings very implicitly. To begin with, the houses in Paruk are burnt to ashes but the actors are not identified at all (264-7). It is reported that “[O]fficials . . . came to Paruk afterwards”, implying that the military officers were not involved in the torching at all. It therefore reiterates the Suharto regime’s statement that it was common people who had got sick and tired of the Communists that committed the

atrocities (Soeharto). Moreover, none of the Paruk villagers are reported killed or missing. It is said that everybody goes home safe and sound (Tohari, *Dancer* 277-8). The ordeals that Srintil experiences are explicitly repressed in the name of time and maturity:

That the upheaval in Srintil's life had just begun the day she was first jailed is narrated elsewhere. That story begins with the story of a beautiful ronggeng twenty years old, who was physically imprisoned and held psychologically captive within the walls of history, *walls that had risen out of selfish greed and misadventure* [emphasis added].

To enable us to open the pages of that story, specific conditions must be met. One of these is the passage of time, which has *the power to dissolve all sentimentality* [emphasis added]. The conditions also demand a maturity of character and a certain degree of honesty in the reader which would provide the courage to acknowledge historical truth. Only if these conditions are met, can the story of Srintil be told. If they are not met, the story will disappear forever to become a part of the secret that surrounds Paruk. (267)

Besides the fact that “the upheaval . . . is narrated elsewhere”, the novel blames Srintil's imprisonment on “selfish greed and misadventure”, which have been intrinsically associated with the Paruk villagers and intrinsically and extrinsically with the PKI. The military is totally out of the picture. The narrator also mentions the power of time to dissolve all sentimentality, which certainly refers to the victims of the persecution rather than the perpetrators.

Although he is specifically assigned to monitor and clear the village from the Communists, Rasus, the main representative of the military in this novel, is portrayed as innocent, as can be seen from the following confession:

Perhaps it was because of this vow that I had often felt inner conflict when I was stationed in Central Java immediately after the upheaval of 1965. I often had to fire mortar shells on bunkers that were *probably filled with human beings* [emphasis added]. Fortunately, *I never saw with my own eyes the people who fell* [emphasis added], cowering under the onslaught of bombs that I had fired. But, I once found myself in a critical situation where *I had only two choices, to kill or be killed* [emphasis added]. I chose the former. My opponent was a young man swinging a machete. He was the one that collapsed in death because my bayonet was faster than his machete. I saw him just before he died, gasping for breath, his eyes wide and staring, his chest torn open by my bayonet. Aside from the political motivations that drove him to join the rebels, he was just a man like myself. And I murdered him. (Tohari, *Dancer* 433).

There are several narrative strategies that the author uses above to repress Rasus' killing of the Communists. First, it is implied that there is a possibility that Rasus does not kill anyone at all. After all, Rasus never sees with his own eyes the people who die because of his shells. The bunkers were only "probably filled with human beings". Second, when he eventually kills, it is because he must protect himself, not because of a political difference. The killing of the Communists is not a matter of choice and is thus depoliticised. By extension, the same argument has been widely used by the military forces to justify the massacre. They killed the Communists because they were attacked first and had to defend themselves (Notosusanto and Saleh). Third, Rasus and the other military officers are pictured as feeling deep guilt about the depoliticised killing. This practically makes him and his colleagues as much the victims as the killed communists, whereas the real culprit is the situation or, in Wood and Flinders' term, "the realm of fate" (155).

From the analysis above, the exclusion of one discourse always brings about the inclusion of another and an inclusion consistently precipitates an exclusion. Aside from the role of agent, this finding is in line with the premise of Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* and Bhabha in “The Other Questions”, as discussed in 0.3. This destabilisation of discourse can happen with the same or different subjects, like for example when *The Dancer* represses the Communists’ critical discourses but exposes their manipulations and when the inclusion of the Communists’ manipulation brings about the exclusion of Paruk’s cultural beliefs and the military’s killings. The reason why the author excludes and depoliticises the military’s exploits will be explored further in the following section.

1.2.3 *The Dancer* and Professionalism

“The Rainbow’s Arc” is the last part of *The Dancer* and it tells of the life of Srintil and the Paruk villagers after the massacre of the Communists in 1965-6. Srintil and Paruk enter a new epoch in the history of post-colonial Indonesia, known as the Suharto era or the military era (see 1.1). In this new constellation, the ruling classes were the military, business owners or the bourgeoisie, and professionals or, in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels’ *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), “the new class of petty bourgeoisie ... [which is] fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie, and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society” (70). The military needed the business owners to financially support their rule while the business owners needed the military to provide stability, to safeguard the capitalistic economic system, and to pacify the working class. The professionals, however, gave a political legitimacy to the Suharto regime, ran the bureaucracy, and supported the private businesses. Besides the military forces and business owners, Suharto’s rise was also helped by the support of a civilian organisation of professionals named Golongan Karya (Vickers 161; see also 1.1). Golongan Karya participated in the general election but officially refused

to call itself a political party, highlighting its supposedly ‘apolitical’ nature. It conveniently won all of the six general elections during the Suharto era, dominated the parliament, and elected Suharto as the president six times. It is this civilian professional class that Srintil is now set against in the last part of the novel.



Fig. 10. Golongan Karya, or the Functional Group, the civilian pillar of the Suharto regime.

The politicisation of the civilian professionals: The civilian professionals in the story are represented by two male characters: Marsusi and Bajus. Marsusi runs a state-owned rubber plantation in Wanakeling while Bajus works for a private contractor company from Jakarta. Although not as wealthy as the bourgeois masters, the professionals hold a considerably large amount of economic capital. Bourdieu states that “economic capital is the root of all the other types of capital” despite his efforts to identify the other types of capital (“Forms” 252). Although it is not always the case, economic capital can alter someone’s social and cultural position, as in the case of Marsusi and Bajus. With their wealth, they achieve cultural and social acceptance among the poor, uneducated, and freshly

excommunicated Paruk village. They exert their economic, social, and cultural power to win Srintil, who is now stripped of all her capital due to her past involvement with the PKI.

Marsusi, the rubber plantation manager, already appeared in the second part of *The Dancer*. There he is described as an uncultured but well-off man. He wants to sleep with Srintil but his method is rather crude, that is, by showing off his money and other material possessions. Marsusi thinks that the most respected capital in a poor community like Paruk village must be material wealth. To some extent, the narrative justifies his presumption. Kartareja and his wife fall too easily to the lure of Marsusi's wealth: "Knowing that it was likely that Marsusi had brought a gold necklace with a diamond pendulum, Mrs. Kartareja rallied all her powers to influence Srintil" (Tohari, *Dancer* 150). Srintil understands Marsusi's strategy and the weakness of her mentors. As stated in the story: "[s]he had heard the roar of a motor cycle entering the village, and knew that Mrs. Kartareja would soon come for her" (150). A motorcycle in that era functioned not only as a medium of transport (economic capital) but also as what Bourdieu terms: "symbolic capital, that is . . . the acquisition of a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability" (*Distinction* 291). He elaborates this definition elsewhere:

a symbolic capital, i.e., to be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority exerting an effect of (mis)recognition, e.g., in the matrimonial market and in all the markets in which economic capital is not fully recognized, whether in matters of culture, with the great art collections or great cultural foundations, or in social welfare, with the economy of generosity and the gift. ("Forms" 245)

Marsusi's motorcycle symbolises his modern culture and high social class in the backward Paruk village. The owner of the motorcycle believes that it will bring recognition in the "matrimonial market", or, in other words, that it will attract the attention and appreciation of

women, particularly Srintil. Later, this old playboy also offers his motorcycle to Srintil, which testifies his “economy of generosity and gift”.

Marsusi evidently has economic capital but apparently does not show the traits of a gentleman in regard to his possession of cultural and social capital. After winning The Kartarejas’ consent, he throws a gold necklace with a diamond pendulum on the table, and directly says to Srintil: “Take it” (Tohari, *Dancer* 154). Apparently, he has not realised that it is Srintil at the peak of her glory that he is facing. It is Srintil who has developed her own theory of men:

Firstly, there were men who acted like randy bulls and harassed or abused women, like most of the men who came to her. They snorted and roared like tigers after successfully pouncing upon a deer . . .

The other kind of men she disliked were those who were weak. They grinned sheepishly, were easily dominated, and had no strength when confronted by a beautiful ronggeng like herself. They willingly gave everything they had, but then whined to her afterwards, almost begging. If she had wanted, Srintil could have commanded them to do anything. She treated them like servants. Men like these were gossipers revealing the worst about their own wives to Srintil, hoping to get her sympathy, and so create greater intimacy with her. Srintil especially hated men like this.

Another kind of male she liked, though, were men like Rasus, and he was her only example. He was as agile as a young deer, his self-confidence almost approaching his arrogance, and he would never beg or whine. (Tohari, *Dancer* 152)

The categorisation above testifies how Srintil has evolved from ‘an ignorant little ronggeng’ into a sophisticated, powerful woman. Her experiences with a number of powerful men have

brought her a degree of consciousness of her own existence *vis a vis* men as her constant pursuers. The passage above also foretells that Srintil will never bow down to Marsusi, who conveniently falls into her first category of men. This is a power relation between an uncultured rich man and a culturally sophisticated, socially experienced, and economically well-off woman. In addition, it also shows that economic capital does not always transform into cultural and social capital successfully, particularly if the owner of the capital projects too much “economism” (Bourdieu, “Forms” 252).

It is not difficult for Srintil to face and exert her power over Marsusi. Srintil starts her encounter with Marsusi with a silence. By doing so, Srintil places herself above Marsusi and provokes him to beg for her attention. Only after that point does Srintil start to talk and, once again, she humiliates Marsusi:

You want to give me the necklace not as a payment for performing dance with you, but for something else. Oh, Mr. Marsusi, I can understand why you are doing this, because what of I’ve done in the past with a number of men. But, sir . . .

You see, I don’t want to do that again. (Tohari, *Dancer* 160)

What Srintil is really putting forward is the idea of professionalism. She is a dancer and will receive a payment for dancing, not for sex. This is quite a new development because Srintil has been taught by Kartareja and his wife in the first part of the trilogy that sex is an integral part of her ‘job description’. Furthermore, Srintil is actually humiliating Marsusi on his own ground as she gives a lecture on professionalism to Marsusi who is, by trade, a professional.

The second encounter between Srintil and Marsusi takes place in the last part of *The Dancer*. Her situation is totally different now. The only thing that Srintil still possesses after the tragedy of 1965-6 is her beauty. As Mrs. Kartareja says to Srintil, “no matter where, no matter when, a beautiful woman is always better off than an ugly woman” (Tohari, *Dancer*

321). Nevertheless, in Srintil's case this beauty becomes a curse rather than a blessing.

Without her economic, cultural, and social power, Srintil's beauty becomes a mere object, an easy target for adventurous men. In contrast, Marsusi remains a rich man, probably richer, as symbolised by his new motorcycle. He is still obsessed with Srintil and uses the same display of wealth to win her over. Through Mrs. Kartareja, he promises to give Srintil his new motorcycle if she is willing to have a date with him.

Seeing that Srintil remains unmoved, Marsusi learns his lesson and tries a more cultured approach. He starts talking about the possibility of Srintil marrying him, as he is now a widower. Furthermore, he finds out what Srintil fears and needs the most in this difficult time: security. For the first time in the story Marsusi displays his social capital, that is, by contacting an officer who receives Srintil's biweekly parole report. The officer in turn signals to Srintil his comradeship with Marsusi and asks her to obey the playboy. This time Srintil genuinely fears Marsusi because she does not fully comprehend the system and network of the bureaucracy. She does not understand the differences between a policeman, a military officer, and a plantation manager (Tohari, 2012). In her mind, every officer is the same, the hand of power. Srintil eventually surrenders to Marsusi's wish. Ironically, in the end it is told that Marsusi takes pity on Srinthil and does not sleep with her, which is related to the repression of sexuality as discussed in 1.2.1.

If the PKI exploits sexuality for politics, and Marsusi plays politics for sex, Bajus, the second petty bourgeoisie, uses both sexuality and politics for business. He is a contractor sent directly from Jakarta to lead a government project near Paruk village. This introduction carries a high degree of similitude with the dawn of the Suharto era, which was characterised by new projects countrywide that were funded by the pro-Suharto western powers (see Weinstein). Furthermore, the introduction directly reveals Bajus' forms of capital. As with Marsusi, Bajus looks rich and is the leader of a state-sponsored project. He drives a car and

this fact is highlighted by the narrator, signalling the superiority of his symbolic capital over Marsusi's motorcycle. It is no coincidence, in fact, that Tohari pictures the petty bourgeoisie in the novel as frequently showing off their symbolic capital. As Bourdieu postulates, in real life, a petty bourgeois "deploys prodigious energy and ingenuity in 'living beyond its means' . . . not to mention all the forms of 'imitation' and all the things that can be made to 'look like' something they are not, so many ways in which the petit bourgeois makes his home and himself look bigger than they are" (*Distinction* 321). This class essentially wants to be recognised as the big bourgeoisie despite lacking the means.

In addition to his economic capital and its symbolic power, Bajus also seems to have a good network in the bureaucracy, perhaps even better than Marsusi, who only knows the local bureaucracy. The most significant description, however, is of his cultural capital. A contractor signifies a higher degree of learning and sophistication than the manager of a rubber plantation. Furthermore, there is a reason why the author mentions Jakarta as his place of origin. In the rural countryside, Jakarta is not merely seen as the capital of the country. It also has a great deal of cultural significance in the post-colonial country, being seen as the most modern, the most learned, and the most powerful place (Paramadhita 500).

At the beginning, Srintil shows respect to Bajus as reverentially as she does to the other government officials in the story. She dares not reject Bajus' wish to visit her. Due to his cultured approach, Bajus begins to attract Srintil's attention. While Marsusi directly discloses his sexual intention to Srintil, Bajus says he just wants to pay a visit:

I really just want to get to know you. Don't worry, I'm not married and my intentions are honorable. What do you say? . . .

That's alright. Well, that's all for now. Tomorrow or the next day, I'd like to come to Paruk and visit you. Would that be okay? (Tohari, *Dancer* 366)

He keeps his promise, treats Srintil respectfully, and even offers her a serious relationship. As reported, “Bajus politely visited Srintil, his behavior steadfast and apparently lacking in ulterior motives. Sometimes he came with friends, and sometimes he invited Kartareja to accompany him. Everything was open and correct” (406). Srintil, seeing herself as a former prostitute and communist prisoner, cannot help feeling elevated by this young, unmarried, rich, cultured and powerful, or in other words, ‘perfect’ man. This time her first reaction is the same as her reaction to Marsusi earlier in the story: a silence. Nonetheless, the meaning of the silence is very different now. It is a cultural silence that a Javanese girl typically gives when she agrees with an idea (Mulder, *Individual*). At the same time, it is also a silence of fear due to uncertainty, as Srintil is not certain whether it is socially possible to have a proper relationship with a ‘government officer’.

Using both cultural and social capital, Bajus slowly but surely leads Srintil out of her fear. He asks the local administrator to pay Srintil fairly for her land, which is taken by the state-sponsored project. He helps Srintil find and rebuild a house. He visits Srintil regularly as a boyfriend normally does. Bajus also takes Srintil on a real vacation, the first one that she has ever had in her life. Thus, “Srintil had to admit that he was flawless in behavior; he only spoke as needed and his words were simple and direct” (Tohari, *Dancer* 408). More significantly, Bajus’ social capital protects and makes Srintil feel safe as he provides her with ‘absolution’ from her past mistakes. As the narrator explains, the people of Dawuan district (where Paruk is located) have simple minds. As Bajus is a contractor in a government-sponsored project, he is seen as a government officer although actually he is not. When Bajus becomes closer to Srintil, that means that Srintil has already been absolved by the government. As a result, Srintil feels deeply indebted to Bajus as she once felt towards Bakar.

As Bakar leads her to a great tragedy, so does Bajus. It is revealed near the end of the story that Bajus is as morally questionable as Bakar. While Bakar manipulates Srintil’s

sensuality and political ignorance for a political ambition, Bajus exploits her sexuality and her nature as a political pariah for business gain. He approaches Srintil because he wants to give her to a bigger contractor from Jakarta so that he gets a share of a contract. Last but not least, he never shows any intention of having a sexual relationship with Srintil because he is sexually impotent due to an accident in a previous project. The fact that Bajus is made impotent in the story signifies the same repression of sexuality that has been discussed in 1.2.1.

While repressing their sexual acts, Ahmad Tohari critically exposes the sexual exploits and financial greed of this class of civilian professionals. The civilian professionals are portrayed as a cunning class, justifying every means to achieve their end. By so doing, he politicises the ostensibly apolitical class and undermines its claimed disinterestedness. Tohari has thus drawn a parallel between the professionals and the Communists. Both the communist Bakar and the professional Bajus possess the institutionalised cultural capital of higher education. Bakar ruthlessly brings Srintil and the Paruk villagers to a political tragedy and, later, only worries about his own safety and does literally nothing to save the villagers. Similarly, Bajus manipulates Srintil's sincere trust and drives her to insanity. Not unlike the Communists, the professionals also represent 'madness' in the framework of the Foucauldian discourse. I argue that it is this very comparison that provoked the wrath of the regime and made the author and the book respectively interrogated and censored. It was not about the exposition of the Communists, who are negatively portrayed, or the 1965 massacre, which is substantially repressed in the novel. This is supported by the fact that the government allowed the second part of the book to be published but withheld the publication of the third part (see 1.2.2). It is also consistent with Garcia's observation that the highest contribution of the book and the very reason why it was censored is its "portrayal of local deprivation following Suharto's rise to power" (122).

The depoliticisation of the military professionals: Unable to cope with this latest trial, Srintil experiences a severe psychological breakdown. She is confined in a room, where she eats and defecates. Srintil's confinement echoes the close link between madness and power, as detailed by Foucault in *History of Madness*. In the Age of Reason, according to Foucault, insanity was considered a moral error rather than a psychological problem, and the insane were put in the same category as prostitutes and blasphemers. They were seen as having freely chosen to be, respectively, eccentric, immoral, and blasphemous as, in a similar manner, the novel perceives a ronggeng like Srintil. Not only was she portrayed as a hopeless victim of the Communists and the professionals, but she was also cursed as a victim of her own doing. Ironically, similar to both the Communists and the professionals that have destroyed her life, Srintil also represents the side of madness in this Foucauldian scheme. The treatment of the insane was to exclude them from society, as Srintil is confined to her room.

Rasus, her childhood boyfriend, saves Srintil from this confinement only to bring her into a more modern confinement, the mental hospital. Modern confinement started at the end of the nineteenth century with the establishment of mental institutions under the supervision of professionals (Foucault, *Madness*). Foucault argues that the more informed and gentle treatment of the insane in these new institutions is as just as inhumane as the confinement in the Age of Reason. It is because "modern man no longer communicates with the madman . . . there is no common language: or rather, it no longer exists" (xxviii). In addition to portraying the banishment of Srintil to the mental institution, this observation further symbolises how the Suharto regime refused to talk and listen to the dissidents or the others. The story ends with the stream of consciousness of Rasus, the modern man, not Srintil, the mad woman, despite her pervading presence throughout the novel.

While the Communists and the professionals jointly epitomise the notion of madness, Rasus and his military background represent the side of reason. Exposing and politicising the

civilian professionals, Tohari once again represses and depoliticises the exploits of the military as the main pillar of the Suharto regime. Rasus, the military officer, is again portrayed as a gentle and noble man who does not seek revenge on Marsusi and Bajus, despite their abuse of Srintil. He cold-headedly focuses only on the well-being of Srintil and the Paruk community instead. As a matter of fact, this was highly unthinkable during the military era. Nobody would dare touch anybody close to a military officer, let alone his lover, because everyone was afraid of the inevitable reprisals. Almost at the end of the story, Rasus shows a complete disinterestedness by promising to marry Srintil in the future.

The Dancer therefore de-professionalises the civilian professionals while at the same time professionalising the military officers. The latter was in line with the Suharto regime's propaganda that the military was apolitical and acted only for the benefit of the state. The problem here is not just whether the military officers are professional but also the deceptive concept of professionalism. If professionalism merely means independence from political processes and parties, the military officers of the Suharto era were indeed professional because they are neither elected by the people nor steered by political parties. Yet here lies the danger of depoliticisation that Wood and Flinders and other critical theorists have warned about (see 0.3). The Indonesian military cannot be held accountable by anyone but itself, and it did steer the political parties rather than being steered. Still on the concept of professionalism, Samuel Huntington, in *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957), states that professional militaries focus on "the development of technical expertise and the fulfilment of their institutional responsibilities" (121). They are likely to follow regulations made by civilian authorities, maintain their neutrality and distance themselves from the temptations of political interference. Nevertheless, as Marcus Mietzner says in his 2009 book, "[Huntington's] 'professionalism' does not exclude the possibility that militaries acquire professional skills that may encourage intervention in

politics” (15). As a matter of fact, they may use their technical expertise to subjugate civilians as the Indonesian military used their training from the country’s western allies to suppress political dissidents in the country.

Similar to the case of Sufism in 1.2.1, the professionalisation of the military shows that the inclusion of a discourse does not always constitute a politicisation of the discourse. Rasus and the military are there only to reinforce the dominant narrative about the apolitical military. This military depoliticisation saved the author from the worst retribution of the regime’s ideological policing. Although Tohari had to undergo an interrogation by the state apparatus for his criticism of the civilian professionals as the supporting pillar of the military regime, he saved himself by not attacking the main pillar of the regime and even put the military in a positive light. This ‘hedging’ fundamentally represents the Foucauldian inclusionary mechanism of ‘commentary’. Paraphrasing Foucault, Said says: “over and above every opportunity for saying something, there stands a regularizing collectivity called a discourse” (*World* 186). Tohari might have flirted to a certain extent with the discourses of resistance, but, in the end, he conformed to the demands of the grand narrative of the regime. Furthermore, the commentary also signifies an act of depoliticisation because the political act of the military in the novel is transferred into the allegedly apolitical, official history of Indonesia by the military.

The politically starved market at the time was also enthusiastic about this ‘illusion’ of resistance. The fact that this part of the novel was censored by the government gave a strong credential to the illusion and made the market even more curious about it. As a result, Tohari has enjoyed a wide readership as well as having his novel adapted twice, which is an extremely rare case in Indonesia. Last but not least, he also received critical acceptance from both the liberal humanist literary circles and, later, the left-wing circles. They both applaud Tohari’s bravery in criticising the ruthless regime. It does not seem to matter to them that

Tohari only politicises the civilian professionals but depoliticises the military professionals.

The fact that he dares to problematise the regime in the novel at all is considered a significant achievement, considering the oppressive situation at the time of its writing.

1.3 Conclusion

The Dancer is a narrative of power relations and capital between Srintil and the powerful, namely the Kejawen community, the PKI, and the professionals. The struggles in the novel signify the power relations between the author, the government, the market, and the communities in the Suharto era, particularly in regard to the issues of religion, politics, and professionalism.

In the first part of the novel, Tohari repoliticises the long-depoliticised Javanese belief and its community. Through the character of Srintil, the author has given a voice to and even subverted the triple subjugated subject in Indonesia: a female prostitute of a backward community. There are at least three deviant sexual practices and beliefs in Paruk, namely the normalcy of prostitution, prostitutes, and open marriage. The representation of Paruk as a politically alive and sexually free community does not necessarily mean that Tohari condones this community of belief and its unique ways of life. The author politicises Paruk's sexuality and the politics around it only to discredit them in the end. Simultaneously, he offers a depoliticised side of the village, particularly through the portrayal of sufistic principles, and condones it. The sufistic discourse prevails because it represents the truth held by the author, the dominant ethnic Javanese, and the majority Traditionalist/Cultural Muslims. Tohari's Sufism also shared, if not supported, the Islamic deradicalisation by the government and the literary communities of Jakarta. Yet, the sufistic mysticism and traditionalism were in direct conflict with the economic-oriented government and the cosmopolitan literary circles. Above

all, the politicisation and depoliticisation of Paruk reflects his idea of an ideal society: an apolitical but moral Islamic society.

In the second part of the novel, Srintil encounters the largest and strongest political party in the Sukarno era: the PKI. Srintil and her community this time are not given as much political voice and power as in the early part of the novel. They are portrayed as uncritical victims of the manipulation and propaganda of the PKI. *The Dancer* also depoliticises the PKI in that it only reinforces what has been believed about the party and removes the possibility of new debates. By means of stylistics, Tohari represses how the PKI represented itself while highlighting how the party condemned its enemies. The repression of the communist discourses was driven less by the demand of prohibition than the dominant ideology. Beside his theistic and non-materialistic belief, the author's political sympathy goes with the ignorance and poor being wrongly accused of and unfairly punished for Communism, which was the political stance of the liberal humanist literary circles. As for the market, the mere exposition of the Communists, be it negative or positive, attracted the politically starved society of the Suharto era.

While the PKI signifies the negative side of Dawuan, the military, as represented by Srintil's boyfriend Rasus, stands for the positive face of the city. Rasus dramatically changes from an innocent into a reflective and eloquent man due to his contact with the military. His intellectual register embodies a Foucauldian truth as well as a discursive depoliticisation. In contrast to the PKI's sexual exploitation, the military is portrayed as asexual or, at worst, not sexually exploitative. *The Dancer* also suppresses the military's persecution and killing of the suspected communists by the pretexts of time and maturity. There are three narrative strategies that the author uses to repress Rasus' killing of the Communists, namely, ignorance, self-defence, and guilt, which have been widely used by the military to justify and depoliticise the massacre.

In the third part, *Srintil* is pitched against one of the new ruling classes in the Suharto era, the civilian professionals, who are represented by Marsusi and Bajus. Using their capital, they try to manipulate the now politically pariah *Srintil* for a sexual exploit and economic benefit. Here, Tohari politicises the ostensibly apolitical class and undermines its claimed disinterestedness, thus drawing a parallel between the professionals and the Communists. While de-professionalising the civilian professionals, Tohari professionalises and hence depoliticises the military professionals. This military depoliticisation fundamentally represents the Foucauldian inclusionary mechanism of ‘commentary’. The novelist might have flirted with the discourses of resistance, but, in the end, he conformed to the grand narrative of the Suharto government, which saved him from the worst retribution of the regime’s ideological policing. The politically starved market at the time was also enthusiastic about this ‘illusion’ of resistance. The novel also received critical acceptance from both the liberal humanist literary groups and, later, the left-wing circles. As a result, not only has Tohari enjoyed a wide readership but his novel has also been adapted twice, which is extremely rare in Indonesia. All in all, *The Dancer* is an extended metaphor of the author negotiating his way through the pressures from the government, the market, and the communities.

Chapter Two

The First Adaptation: Blood, Sex, and Money

As I mentioned in the Introduction, so far there has been no academic study of Yazman Yazid's film *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* (henceforth, *Blood and Crown*), the first adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel *The Dancer*. This film has been mentioned only in the reviews and studies of the critically acclaimed second adaptation of the novel and it has usually been negatively compared with the latter. Part of the problem is that *Blood and Crown* has not been considered as a serious/interpretive/political film and, therefore, it has not been considered worth analysing. It is consistently dismissed as a film that only exploits sexuality and does not faithfully represent the content of the political novel (see 0.2). In this chapter, I argue that *Blood and Crown*, as far as its surviving screenplay is concerned, is as serious, interpretive, and political as the novel and the second adaptation. The film powerfully represents what Krishna Sen has called "the politics of depoliticisation" as propagated and practised by the Indonesian military regime (*Indonesian* 6). I will begin my analysis by examining the impacts of the military regime's political, economic, and cultural

policies on the contemporary film institutions and discourses. I will then continue with the discussion of specific factors behind the disappearance of the film, ranging from the base and superstructure of the film archiving to the cultural status of film adaptation. The final part will demonstrate how the depoliticisation and politicisation of Indonesian cinema correspond with the content of the surviving script of the missing film.

2.1 Film Institutions and Discourses in the Military Era

In this sub-chapter, I will present a historical survey of Indonesian cinema during the Suharto/New Order/military era (1965-98). Among the few available studies of Indonesian cinema, there are two monographs that have attracted most attention from scholars, namely, Karl Heider's *Indonesian Cinema: National Culture on Screen* (1991) and Krishna Sen's *Indonesian Cinema: Framing the New Order* (1994). There are at least three reasons why these two works have gained their prominence. First of all, they were written by scholars from English-speaking countries with all of the privileges previously discussed in 0.1. The fact that the two researchers were 'outsiders' also gave them certain freedom and detachment that their Indonesian counterparts, such as Misbach Yusa Biran and Salim Said, could not possibly afford at the time. Thomas Barker, in 2012, even considers Biran and Said as "key ideologues . . . [who were] heavily invested in the maintenance of New Order ideology" (17). Second, these books are relatively new compared to similar works such as Biran's *Indonesian Cinema: A Glance of History* (1982) and *Snapshots of Indonesian Film History and Non-Theatrical Films in Indonesia* (1987), and Said's *Shadows on the Silver Screen: A Social History of Indonesian Films* (1991). There have been a few publications on the military-era cinema since 1994, but they are all articles about specific films and topics. So far, these two books are the most comprehensive literature on the subject.

In addition to those common strengths, there are deeper similarities between the two monographs. First, they both agree that Indonesian cinema generally emphasises the importance of ‘order’. Heider argues that, while Hollywood cinema focuses on “good/evil” and “good guys/bad guys”, Indonesian films are concerned about “order/disorder” and “agents of order/agents of disorder” (29). Sen goes further by stating: “I would argue almost every film produced in New Order Indonesia has a narrative structure that moves from order through disorder to a restoration of the order” (159). The different orientations between Hollywood and Indonesian cinema represent the different ways in which they look at individuals and society. While the realisation of ‘goodness’ in Hollywood cinema necessitates an individual resisting a society, ‘order’ in Indonesian films requires an individual submitting to a society. The third similarity is that both books recognise the powerful influences of the state on Indonesian cinema. This includes the roles of governmental institutions and policies in the film industry, films, and audiences.

Nevertheless, there are several differences between the two studies and I will discuss only those directly relevant to my topic. First of all, Heider’s book is based on an anthropological study that attempts to understand Indonesian people from their films and *vice versa*. Sen’s book, however, is derived from a ‘proper’ film study, covering technical, substantial, historical, and theoretical aspects of Indonesian cinema. This difference seems to influence their selection of research subjects. While Sen tends to focus on avant-garde or auteur films, Heider deliberately deals with formula or genre films. As he states:

There is an irony in all this for an anthropologist: The most useful films for a cultural analysis are the genre films, while the best films from a cinematographic standpoint are the auteur films which have been deliberately distanced from their cultural roots . . . a list of the Ten Best Indonesian Films

would not be the same as a list of the Ten Most Indonesian Films. And here, as anthropologist, I am looking for Indonesian-ness in cinema. (6)

Finally, Sen disagrees with what she calls Heider's "universalist" and "nationalist" arguments concerning the representation of women as passive objects in Indonesian cinema (135).

Heider contends that that kind of representation is not uniquely Indonesian but universal; there are many strong images of women in Indonesian films. Being an anthropologist, Heider tries to describe the representation of women 'as it is', while Sen, being a feminist, appears to go further by asking 'why it is so'.

The following historical survey will be based mainly on those two important studies. However, I will try to relocate their findings in the contexts of depoliticisation and politicisation as well as to give more attention to a subject barely discussed in either work: Indonesian film adaptation. Unlike my historical survey in Chapter One, I will first discuss Indonesian film institutions before examining what and how specific discourses were depoliticised and politicised in Indonesian cinema because, unlike Indonesian literature, Indonesian cinema has been intensely controlled and influenced by state and private institutions.

2.1.1 Depoliticised Institutions

Heider does not have much to say about Indonesian film institutions although he acknowledges their powerful influence over films. By contrast, Sen does and further classifies those institutions into four groups, namely, 1) corporate and professional bodies, 2) production, import, and distribution, 3) government censorship, and 4) audiences. They respectively correspond with the communities, market (including audience), and government in my own division of external factors in Indonesian literature and cinema. It is my contention that all of the institutions played a significant role in the depoliticisation and

politicisation of Indonesian films. The much feared and talked about government censorship is just part of the whole story.

Film communities: The film communities comprise *Dewan Film Nasional* (the Film Council), *Festival Film Indonesia* (the Indonesian Film Festival), and professional organisations. The first Film Council aimed to “facilitate productions of quality films which would function as models to commercial producers and raise audience appreciation of Indonesian cinema” (Sen, *Indonesian* 52). The productions were funded by a flat levy on imported films as regulated through the Ministerial Decree No. 71 Fund by the Minister of Information B. M. Diah (Biro Hukum, 1964). The Council was thus an attempt to provide a forum and an organisation for filmmakers that would be independent from bureaucratic and financial interests.

This spirit of independence was well-reflected in the Council’s membership composition and criteria. The Council consisted of nine members who were selected based on their “expertise, experience, education and dedication to national cinema, from . . . the private and the government sector, not representing organisations nor because of official position” (Biro Hukum, 1964, my trans.). This composition and criteria clearly represent the advanced governmental and societal depoliticisation, as discussed by Wood and Flinders. The Council’s policy making was being liberated from the control of the government and existing political parties. This action was more typical of advanced democratic countries than military states like New Order Indonesia.

The advanced depoliticisation, however, only lasted for a year. Air Marshall Budiarjo, the new Minister of Information, restructured the Council by almost doubling its membership, with seven members from government departments (Biro Hukum, 1964). The Council’s role was now reduced to advising the Minister on matters of policy. The next minister, Mashuri revoked the Ministerial Decree No. 71 Fund, the *raison d’etre* of the

Council. Its advisory function was also taken over by another institution. The Council was eventually revived from limbo by General Ali Murtopo, the fourth Minister and a very powerful figure in the military's intelligence activities. It now had forty-nine members with the Minister as its ex-officio chairperson (Biro Hukum, 1979). Six of its members were from the Department of Information and there was one from each of six other government departments. The remaining eighteen were representatives of religious and social organisations, including Golongan Karya (the ruling party)-affiliated groups, and individual intellectuals and academics. The Council's policies and guidelines "increasingly echoed the same instructions from other institutions", particularly the censors (Sen, *Indonesian* 54). Very little changed under the next Minister of Information, Harmoko. In 1986, the minister defined its function simply as making recommendations to the minister about promoting the film industry—all of these developments show how in the military era governmental politicisation worked simultaneously with societal depoliticisation. The Council was effectively taken over by the government and concurrently freed from political parties, except the ruling party Golongan Karya. The existence of social and individual entities in the Council was merely for the purpose of legitimising the preconceived policies of the government.

The next film institution is the Indonesian Film Festival, which was a regular annual event during the military era. The festival was mostly held in the national capital and sometimes in different provincial capitals. Critics saw it merely as a publicity campaign for the successive information ministers and provincial governors (Sen, *Indonesian* 53). The festival was also the single biggest publicity event for Indonesian cinema itself. It drew enormous media attention to Indonesian cinema and was the only occasion when major theatres in the city where it was held showed Indonesian rather than foreign films. The jury members were selected by the festival's organising committee and appointed by the Minister of Information (Biran, *Snapshot*). In general, the jury's opinions were very similar to those

expressed in the film reviews of national publications such as *Kompas* and *Tempo* because journalists from those media regularly sat among the jury (Sen, *Indonesian* 54).

Although appointed by the government, the intellectuals were sometimes not in agreement with the bureaucrats and financiers. According to Sen, the award can be seen “to represent the values, ideals, and interests of the urban intelligentsia, of which Indonesian filmmakers were a part” (*Indonesian* 55). The festival award system operated not by censorship (as the bureaucrats performed) or exclusion (as the financiers did), but through privileging certain films and their makers and, by extension, “certain perspectives on art and society” (55). Therefore, a state-produced film did not necessarily win a *Citra* (the Indonesian Oscar) as in the case of *Janur Kuning* (1974), a film about the heroic role of General Suharto in the War of Independence and a *Citra* did not necessarily make a film popular in the market. Nevertheless, there were state-produced films, still on the heroic role of the supreme leader of the regime, which were considered ‘artistic’ by the jury and hence won several Citras, such as *Serangan Fajar* (1982) and *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984). It is quite clear that the “certain perspectives on art and society” above refer to Liberal Humanism’s ‘art for art’s sake’, which has been discussed in the previous two chapters. Despite their occasional differences, the regime found this apolitical perspective on art and society generally harmless and agreeable.

Due to the poor film database and lack of adaptation studies, I have only identified two film adaptations that won the best film category during the Suharto era. Those films are *Pacar Ketinggalan Kereta* (1988) and *Taksi* (1990). There should be many more victorious film ‘appropriations’ because there were many literary authors writing and/or directing winning films such as, just to name a few, Usmar Ismail (the father of Indonesian cinema), Asrul Sani, Teguh Karya, and Putu Wijaya. If the two film adaptations above can represent the privileged perspectives in Indonesian film adaptation in the military era, they clearly

belong to the art for art's sake camp. Neither the source texts nor the adaptations could be considered 'political' even in the broad sense of the term. In addition, all of them were based on contemporary literature rather than writings from the previous eras. A possible reason for this is that literature from the previous eras, including the pre-independence era, usually had a strong social commitment, if not a political one (Foulcher).

Ikatan Karyawan Film dan Televisi Indonesia (the Union of Film and Television Employees) became the only organisation for the artistic, technical, and unskilled staff of the film industry. The Union was set up to speak for 'employees' rather than 'workers', which had two very different political connotations in the anti-communist state (Sen, *Indonesian* 55). Membership of the Union became compulsory for anyone wishing to work with film studios or production units. Aside from the political screening, this coercive measure was the embryo of the professionalisation or the advanced depoliticisation of the film industry in the post-military era (see 3.1). Consisting mainly of technical and unskilled staff, the Union was organised by the most highly paid and highly skilled professionals (Said). In 1976, five other organisations were officially endorsed as the only lawful organisations for specific sectors of cinema: the Indonesian Film Artists' Union, the Indonesian Film Producers' Union, the All Indonesian Association of Film Theatre Companies, the Indonesian Association of Film Studios, and the Indonesian Association of Subtitlers (Biro Hukum, 1979). Not unlike the Union's case, no-one could take any part in the making of a film without the prior approval of the functional organisation of which he or she was a member. Sen concludes that those organisations generally failed to influence government policies that affected films and/or their members (*Indonesian* 56).

Film market: Most film producers in the military era were small-scale entrepreneurs (Sen, *Indonesian* 65). Their financial insecurity made them highly sensitive to the slightest hint of government disapproval since they could not afford to have their films rejected by the

censors. As David Hanan highlights in “Innovation and Tradition in Indonesian Cinema” (2010), the fact that most of them were of Chinese or Indian descent certainly did not help their case. Therefore, these private producers generally played it safe and avoided producing films that provoked the censors, particularly political films. What I mean by ‘political films’ here are those which showed critical and/or different political views from those of the military regime. Sen posits that all Indonesian films of the military era were essentially political because they represented and supported the politics of depoliticisation of the military regime (*Indonesian* 6). Seemingly apolitical films of the military era were in fact highly political films in the same way that depoliticisation is the highest form of politicisation (Wood and Flinders).

In the early 1970s, two companies closely associated with the government were set up (Sen, *Indonesian* 65). The first was *Safari Sinar Sakti* Film Corporation, which grew out of a group of performers who supported the political rallies of the government party. Metro 77 started as a film unit of the Jakarta Metropolitan Police to educate the urban masses. In the late 1970s, the Minister of Information appointed General Gufran Dwipayana, a former personal assistant of the President for media affairs, as the head of *Perusahaan Film Negara* (the State Film Corporation). Liya Mendrawati, in 2008, describes how, under Dwipayana’s leadership, the Corporation transformed itself from a maker of newsreel and documentaries to a producer of the three big budget feature films on the heroic role of General Suharto. Given the small size and financial weakness of private companies, film making by the state and affiliated groups became a significant factor in Indonesian cinema. The three most expensive films made in Indonesia in the early 1980s, for instance, were all produced by these two entities.

In terms of import, the military regime abolished the heavy restrictions against film imports that had been implemented by the Sukarno government and supported by the PKI.

The number of foreign films skyrocketed to about seven hundred in the late 1960s (Biran, *Glance*). So strong was the association of the anti-import with the condemned PKI that no-one dared to question this new policy. However, direct sales of foreign films remained forbidden probably because of security and censorship concerns, particularly with regard to communist ideas, as well as the economic interests of the family and cronies of the new President. Yet, not long afterwards several factors forced the government to intervene on behalf of the local film industry. In its early years, the military regime had been generally responsive to the demands of local intellectuals and professionals to win their support. Even before 1965, film critics and professionals had started arguing against the unrestricted imports (see Biran, *Glance*). Sjuman Djaya, the appointed head of the Directorate of Film and a legendary filmmaker himself, pushed hard for the protection of the local film industry (Sen, *Indonesian* 57). The Minister B.M. Diah, a long-time cultural nationalist, was sympathetic to these demands and produced Ministerial Decree No. 71, which imposed a flat levy for each imported film as discussed previously. That money was then made available to local film productions and the funding import company credited as a co-producer. Due to this policy, local film production began to rise from only twenty-one in 1970 to eighty-four in 1974 (Biran, *Snapshot*).

The politico-economic development also forced the regime to show a greater gesture of nationalism. In January 1974, university students, secretly supported by prominent civilian and military figures, went on strike. This quickly turned into a great riot, in protest against the apparent domination of foreign capital in Indonesia (see Aspinall). Responding to the nationalistic sentiment and the sustained demand of local film professionals, the next Minister of Information, Mashuri decided to drastically cut imports by 100 each year (Biro Hukum, 1964). It also imposed a requirement on importers to fund the production of at least one Indonesian film for every three films they imported. In addition, it was now obligatory

for every theatre to show at least two Indonesian films every month. As a result, a record-breaking number of 124 Indonesian films were produced in 1977 (Biran, *Snapshot*).

However, at the same time the government was taking steps to increase the bargaining position of local film importers against foreign film sellers. The reason was no less nationalistic than the import restriction: that is, to build ‘national giants’ to counterbalance the power of ‘foreign giants’ and related political and cultural influences (Sen, *Indonesian* 58; see also Robison, *Rise*). As I argued in Chapter One, the Suharto government was, in many ways, fascistic rather than liberal. It bred and protected national capitalists, most of whom were the President’s cronies and family, at the expense of both local film professionals and multinational investors. Mashuri asked film importers to form four consortia to better negotiate with foreign film dealers (Sen, *Indonesian* 59). Nonetheless, over the years, imports were eventually monopolised by the Subentra Group, owned by Sudwikatmono, the foster brother of the President. The import monopoly was driven by the same businessman’s control of film theatres. With this dual power, Sudwikatmono could dictate to other importers and eventually acquired them into his growing empire.

In 1979, when the regime and the consortia had consolidated their power, the next Minister, General Ali Murtopo, abolished the funding obligation and required importers just to pay a flat levy for every imported film (Biro Hukum, 1979). The levy was only a tenth of the average film production cost at the time. Keeping the import quota, Murtopo raised the permissible copies of every foreign film from two to six. This means that imported films could now play in six theatres at the same time and/or preserve better copies to penetrate smaller towns and second-run theatres. Thus, imported films now occupied a greater share of the market than in the pre-restriction era. Sudwikatmono, the import and theatre king, also began constructing theatres with multiple screens or multiplexes. The multiplexes practically rendered the obligation to screen two Indonesian films every month meaningless because

local films now received proportionately less screen time. As a consequence, the number of local films decreased drastically from 124 in 1977 to fifty-two in 1982 (Biran, *Snapshots*). The question is, why did the government demote local productions after what it had done to promote them? Christine Hakim, in “Indonesian Cinema as Seen by Christine Hakim” (2005), argues that this was “because domestic films in Indonesia already had the ability to attract large audiences and had the capacity to influence the Indonesian masses” (9).

In the late 1980s, the power relations were no longer just between the local importers and producers but also involved the direct hand of the American empire. Motion Pictures Export Association of America (MPEA), representing all major Hollywood studios, openly entered into the power struggle. The MPEA blamed the import monopoly for the reduced prices of their films and their shrinking market share compared to Hong Kong and Taiwanese films, which were Sudwikatmono’s favourite imports (Sen, *Indonesian* 64). The resentment among Indonesian producers and directors of Sudwikatmono was so deep that these ‘post-colonial’ subjects were willing to make an alliance with the ‘neo-colonial’ agent of the American empire. Some contacted MPEA officers in Singapore to give them information about how to deal with the Subentra group (Robison, *Authoritarian*). Others created a public discourse in favour of the MPEA’s demand for the right to distribute directly to the cinemas without a middleman.

In 1991, after years of negotiation, the MPEA dropped its demand to distribute directly and agreed to work through two of Sudwikatmono’s subsidiaries with some concessions (Sen, *Indonesian* 64). This development indicates that the history of Indonesian cinema has never been a purely domestic problem but a typically post-colonial affair. In the early independence era, the Sukarno government and film professionals agreed to restrict and eventually ban Hollywood films and their sales agent American Motion Pictures Association in Indonesia (AMPAI) (Said). In the subsequent era, however, film professionals had to ally

themselves with the MPEA against the government and its import cronies. Nonetheless, when the empire had to choose between the fascistic regime and its cronies on the one side and the professionals on the other, history repeated itself. As in other countries, such as Thailand and Chile, the empire pragmatically opted for the former and abandoned the latter.

Audiences are not an organised unit like the other institutions discussed in this section. During the military era, there were no reliable statistics about the audiences of Indonesian films. *Biro Pusat Statistik* (Central Bureau of Statistics) could collect data from regular theatres in the cities and larger towns but could not capture those from cheap, bamboo-fenced, seasonal theatres, popularly known as '*misbar*' (the acronym of *gerimis bubar*, literally meaning disperse when it rains), which were mostly in rural areas. It also failed to estimate the audiences of *bioskop keliling* (mobile cinema) and *layar tancap* (literally meaning screen stuck in the ground), which were very popular in small towns and villages. The mobile shows were usually held for free by the government for programme dissemination, industries for product marketing, or individuals for celebrations (weddings, circumcisions, and birthdays). The programmes and products were usually advertised at intervals during the show. The audiences of seasonal and mobile cinema probably made up the biggest part of Indonesian audiences.

The statistics therefore do not correspond exactly to the government's and film industry's construction of audiences at the time. Their shared construction was that foreign, particularly American and European, films sold well in prosperous and well-educated parts of big city populations, while Indonesian films were preferred by the working classes of big cities, small towns, and rural areas (Said). With this in mind, the government required mobile cinemas to only screen Indonesian films. This policy was devised to protect the 'illiterate' and 'unsophisticated' villagers from foreign ideas, particularly the latent danger of Communism. It should be stated here that the biggest supporters of the PKI were the rural

working classes. The government understood that, with the elaborate depoliticisation of Indonesian films, those working classes would watch only apolitical or depoliticised films. In addition to the government's pressure, the film industry was self-motivated to produce non-political films due to the same belief that the lower classes did not favour political films.

The area in which the statistics and the construction of the government and film industry fairly match is on the age group of the audiences. The Bureau's figures for 1984 indicate that the largest segment of the audiences for all films was made up of 15-24 year olds. The figures for 1987 show that the 15-24-year-old group still topped the chart but this time were rivalled by the 30-plus group. Similarly, producers and censors believed that the largest section of the Indonesia film audience was made up of teenagers, which resulted in many adaptations of successful teen literature into films. This construction seems fairly accurate because these teen-lit film adaptations sold very well, if not dominated, the 1980s market of Indonesian films (see Tjasmadi). Their domination did not continue in the Festival, however, perhaps because of the popular and thus less 'artistic' appeal of the adaptations and the source texts. Furthermore, this construction also enhanced the ongoing depoliticisation because the filmmakers believed that teenagers were as politically disinterested as the working classes. It also gave another moral justification for government censors, who saw teenagers as just as unsophisticated and easily influenced as the rural residents and therefore in need of protection from the 'evil of foreign ideologies'.

Film censorship: There were marked differences between books (particularly, novels) and film censorship with regard to the position of film as a more popular and, therefore, more controlled medium. The government justified this discriminatory control with the assumption that "cinema reaches the non-reading, illiterate, and therefore unsophisticated and easily influenced, masses" (Sen, *Indonesian* 71). Book censorship was carried out by the Office of the Attorney General whose job was more than just dealing with books. Generally,

the Office would start paying attention to a specific book only after a public controversy or a tip-off from another state apparatus such as the intelligence service. There was no elaborate official requirement or procedure to which a book author or publisher had to adhere before, during, and after the writing or printing of a book. Thus, most of the time the Office worked rather passively, and censorship was mainly self-imposed.

In contrast, the government established and empowered a very comprehensive and intricate system of film censorship. This system worked solely for the purpose of monitoring, changing, and making decisions about films. It also evolved based on the developments in society and the needs of the regime. *Badan Sensor Film* (the Board of Film Censorship) was officially the only agency of film censorship. In general, every film produced in or imported into the country had to be presented to the Board and seen by a committee of three members. If this committee could not arrive at a common decision on a film, it would be presented to the full membership of the Board. The producer or importer of the film could also propose a reassessment by the plenary board if it had been rejected by the committee. As a matter of fact, the Board was only part of the comprehensive mechanism of film censorship. In general, censorship was carried out in four stages. Even before the shooting of a film, the script had to be approved by the Directorate of Film of the Information Department (Heider 22). Upon completion of the filming, the unedited prints had to be sent to the Directorate for advice about what needed to be changed and/or deleted. The result was then submitted to the Board for acceptance, rejection, or change (Sen, *Indonesian* 66). Provincial governments could stop the accepted film from being screened in their provinces due to ‘local concerns’.

The depoliticisation and politicisation of Indonesian cinema can also be seen from the evolving membership composition of the Board (see Sen, *Indonesian* 67-9). The first Board under the military regime consisted of twenty-four government representatives and nine from the political parties. This composition was a legacy of the highly-politicised Sukarno era. In

1968, Minister Budiarto replaced this large group with a much smaller team with a substantially reduced government representation. In 1971, consistent with their forced mergers and decreasing power, the political parties were totally excluded from the Board and replaced by professionals, that is, film intellectuals and artists. Similar to the case of the Film Council, this move actually reflects the advanced governmental and societal depoliticisation, which do not normally take place in militarised countries. The government and political parties were replaced by seemingly independent professionals.

This anomaly did not last long and the regime soon adopted a more authoritarian mode of control. In 1973, there was a large-scale return of government representatives with two each from seven government departments. The artists and intellectuals were replaced by three non-governmental groups that had less to do with film, namely the journalists' union, women, and freedom fighters. The representation of government departments, especially the security agencies, was further increased by Minister Ali Murtopo, the intelligence general, in 1979. The security agencies were from the intelligence coordinating body, the Office of the Attorney General, and the police. Government departments made up two-thirds of the Board, and over a third of those were from its security agencies. In addition to the simultaneous governmental and societal depoliticisation, this also reflects what political scientists call "securitisation", one of the strategies of discursive depoliticisation (Wood and Flinders 164). A political affair was treated as a security concern and thus the true political nature of the matter was concealed.

With the numerous institutions and long processes involved, it might be surprising that film censorship was generally less strict than book censorship. When it came to books, there was no pre-publication censorship except the self-censorship done by authors, editors, and publishing houses themselves. Yet, once a book created a governmental or public controversy, the authority would just ban it and instruct the publishing house to withdraw the

copies from the market with a minimal chance of re-publication. The long censorship mechanism provided filmmakers with opportunities to receive feedback, change their films, and/or negotiate with the censorship institutions. As observed by Sen:

Despite the constant complaints of Indonesian film-makers about the odious restraining powers of the BSF, there are relatively few cases where the powers of the BSF need to be directly exercised in the form of either excising sections of a film or banning films. The overwhelming majority of films are formed by the prescriptions of other institutions rather than the proscriptions of the BSF. (*Indonesian* 50)

There are several underlying reasons behind this leniency. First of all, film making involved large capital in the production and distribution line. The military regime, after all, was the protector of national and international capitalism. Moreover, film production, import, and distribution were thoroughly controlled by the close associates and family members of General Suharto. That was why there were two pre-censorship stages, involving the approval of the scenario before and after the shooting took place. This protected the financiers against investing in a film that would ultimately be held or banned by the Board.

Second, the financiers did not have any interest in the production of political films, which were one of the major targets of the censorship. In general, films are more capitalised and commercialised than literature and therefore fall more easily to the market's demand. Film making is costly, and was much costlier in the pre-digital and internet era of the 1980s. It was still a business of companies and not of individuals. The financiers would make sure that their big investment paid off and the surest way to do that was to produce what the market demanded. As mentioned earlier, they believed that the high-class audience were more interested in western movies while the lower classes preferred local comedy, horror, and erotic films. Political films would therefore only attract the middle class or, to be more

precise, a tiny section of this class, because the majority preferred watching either foreign films as the higher class did or non-political films as the lower class did. Moreover, the political films could always run into the danger of being substantially cut, which thus prolonged the production process. Even worse, they could be completely rejected by the censorship and thus generate no return on investment at all.

Third, most of the time the filmmakers performed self-censorship or ‘self-depoliticisation’ even before submitting a first script. This self-censorship continued throughout all of the stages as described. The censorship system worked in a panopticon-like manner. Although it was impossible for the censorship institutions to observe all of the filming processes at once, the fact that the filmmakers did not know when they were being watched compelled them to act as if they were being watched at all times, effectively controlling their own behaviour. The financiers might directly threaten the filmmakers because censored or banned films meant a capital loss to the former. The filmmakers had to obey so that they could keep their jobs in the constantly shrinking job market. Finally, the self-censorship was also influenced by the ‘artistic taste’ of the filmmakers themselves. This taste had been shaped by socio-cultural factors such as education, community, and religion. With the depoliticisation of those factors, as discussed in the previous chapters, the filmmakers consciously or unconsciously internalised a distinctly apolitical taste.

2.1.2 Depoliticised Discourses

The depoliticisation of and by the film institutions resulted in the repression and representation of certain discourses in Indonesian cinema at the time. This repression was carried out as much by government institutions as by the filmmakers themselves. In addition to the demand from the film industry for clear standards, the censorship rules were written and published to minimise overt depoliticisation and to maximise self-depoliticisation. In

1977, the Department of Information announced the implementation of *Pedoman Sensor* (the Censorship Guideline). Further guidelines were produced in 1980 by the Board of Film Censorship in *Kode Etik Badan Sensor Film* (the BFC Code). This code was also supported by the Film Council's 1981 *Kode Etik Produksi Film Nasional* (the FC Code). According to Sen, there were at least two common targets of the three guidelines: social conflicts and criticisms of the government (*Indonesian* 70). By Act No. 8 Year 1992, the government changed the name of Badan Sensor Film to *Lembaga Sensor Film* (the Institute of Film Censorship). In 1994, coinciding with the publication of Sen's book, all of the guidelines and codes were integrated, updated, and upgraded into Government Regulation No. 04 Year 1994.

In this section, I will discuss the repression and inclusion of discourses, once again, under the framework of the Five Fundamental Principles of the Nation or the Pancasila. The reason remains the same as in the last chapter: the military regime claimed that their acts of depoliticisation were for the sake of implementing the Pancasila 'purely and accordingly' and for correcting the violations of the same principles by the Sukarno administration. In addition, by using this wide framework, I can add a few more discursive practices that Heider and Sen have not discussed, but that were equally existent and significant in Indonesian cinema at the time.

Belief in the One and Only God: Both the Censorship Guideline and the BFC Code ruled that films were to be banned if they could "destroy the unity of religions in Indonesia" or "exploit sentiments of ethnicity, religion, race, or group or incite social tensions" (Sen, *Indonesian* 69). The FC Code required films to portray "the harmonious co-existence of religions" and "mutual respect for the practice of faith in accordance with the religion and belief of each person" (70). Furthermore, films were not allowed to "project scenes which show the conflict of one religion with another" (70). Accordingly, the Board also prohibited

films from projecting one religion as a model of statecraft because that could provoke other religions and endanger the interreligious harmony. Films were also discouraged from narrating stories of religious movements and/or their leaders. That is why *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah* (1981), a film adaptation based on a novel by an Islamic leader Buya Hamka, was not allowed to be circulated before the general election in the same year because the novel and the adaptation were considered pro-political Islam.

Sexuality was another important aspect of the religious-related area of censorship. Erotic or sexual films were very popular in Indonesia in the 1980s-1990s. Even Indonesian 'auteurs' made sexual movies or inserted sexual scenes into their 'serious' works to meet the market demand. Nevertheless, what constituted sexuality in Indonesian films at the time was very different from that in Hollywood cinema. The BFC Code devoted a special section to this matter and what was accordingly not permissible. It forbade, for instance, "birth scenes of human beings or animals which can create lust" and "showing contraception methods" (my trans.). In terms of presentation, sex and sexuality were not to be pictured explicitly on the screen regardless of the target audience. In addition, sex was not to be portrayed as a pleasurable activity between two or more consenting adults, not even as a lawful expression of love between a husband and a wife.

This resulted in what Heider calls "an elaborate pattern of narrative conventions" in Indonesian cinema (66). He observes that sex had to be presented in films in the form of "sadism or rape" (66). Sen adds another common representational form of sex and sexuality: prostitution, which will be discussed later (*Indonesian* 144-7). Indonesian filmmakers developed these conventions to "satisfy a wide variety of desires and expectations while not offending another range of contradictory norms" (Heider 66). The conventions met the expectations of the religious communities in that sexuality was not depicted as a pleasurable experience but more as a sinful act, which was in line with the dominant belief.

Simultaneously, they fulfilled the demand of the market for adult entertainment, albeit not fully, and the need of the government for a mass diversion from politics. The conventions were thus the common ground between those different interests.

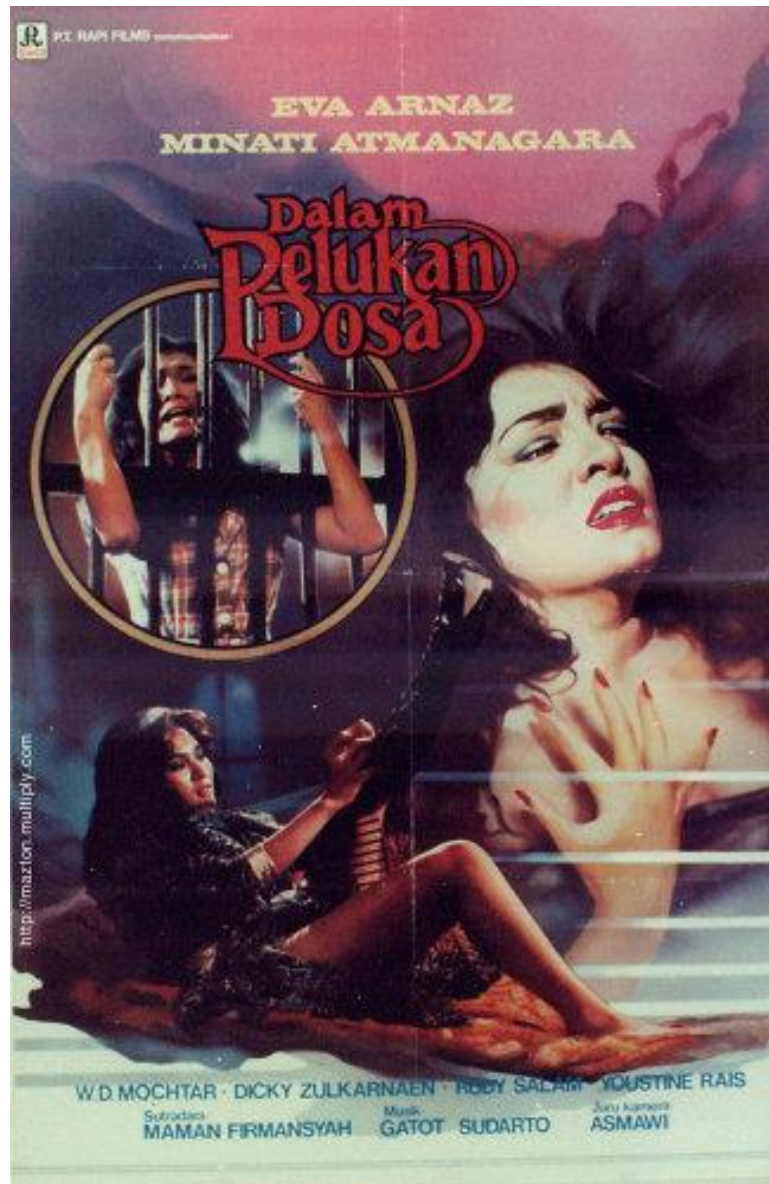


Fig. 11. *Dalam Pelukan Dosa* (*In the Embrace of Sins*), a 1984 film whose title and picture indicates how sexuality was represented in Indonesian cinema.

Just and civilised humanity: Still related to erotic films, the film institutions shared a set of discourses regarding the representation of women in Indonesian films. First, the ideal or civilised woman should be reproductive, not productive. A typical conflict in family drama began when a husband lost his job and his wife had to work and, accordingly, the conflict

was resolved when the husband found a new job and the wife returned to her traditional role as a housewife. Second, the ideal woman must be inwardly and outwardly feminine, not masculine or boyish because the latter was considered a mental problem that must be cured. In *Guruku Cantik Sekali* (1979), Dina, a strict school teacher, hates men and will not allow her female students any contact with male students. It is revealed in the end that she had a traumatic experience with the man she loved. The flashback shows that her arguments about equality throughout the film are mere expressions of a psychic disorder resulting from the past trauma.

Next, the ideal woman should be silent, not vocal or loud. This idealisation can be seen in two auteur films by two different generations, namely, *Apa yang Kau Cari, Palupi?* (1969) by Asrul Sani and *Rembulan dan Matahari* (1979) by Slamet Raharjo. In each film, there is one female character who listens, loves, and serves in total silence, and one female character who questions, rebels, and rejects men. Both films championed the former, albeit in a different manner. Besides Sen, there are other scholars who attribute this idealisation to the colonial representation of native women as opposed to Dutch/European women, such as Peter Carey and Vincent Houben (1987). This colonial legacy was apparently continued by the Javanising Suharto regime (brown colonialism). Indeed, vocal heroines have been abundant in non-Javanese narratives such as Acehnese, Balinese, and Ambonese.

Many genres of Indonesian cinema placed women only in secondary roles so that their words and deeds made up an insignificant and/or inconsequential part of the story. Sen admits that there were quite a few films in the military era in which female presence dominated the screen, but they were “emphatically presented to be seen” so that the films sold (Sen, *Indonesian* 134). In fact, many Indonesian films were exactly about seeing the women, but not about the women speaking or thinking. There was a space for women to be productive, man-like, and vocal, that is, in films centred on prostitution such as *Noda Tak*

Berampun and *Bernafas dalam Lumpur*, both of which were produced in 1970. As Sen explains, “the popularity of prostitutes as subjects was understandable. It allowed films to use images of the female body in ways that would be difficult when films only had good girls and wives in them” (*Indonesian* 145). Thus, prostitution films, so to speak, were similar to, and sometimes indistinguishable from, erotic films of this vintage. Yazid’s *Blood and Crown* can be located at the intersection of these two genres. In addition, prostitution was normally portrayed in films as a social (poverty) or personal (betrayed by men and far from religious guidance) tragedy, indicating both governmental and societal depoliticisation.

Another film genre that exploited the female body but did not really attract the attention of either Sen or Heider was sex comedy. Indonesian sex comedies typically combined slapstick, adult humour, and sexy women. Unlike prostitution films or Hollywood sex comedies, they rarely contained sexual scenes. The selling point was more the female body’s sensual parts although these were never fully exposed. This genre achieved its highest popularity in the late 1980s through films by a comedian trio named *Warkop DKI* although it started much earlier with other comedian groups such as *Kwartet Jaya*, *Surya Grup*, and *Bagio CS*.

While women and, by implication, men were being ‘disciplined’, non-heteronormative genders were either repressed or marginalised on screen. In *Genders and Sexualities in Indonesian Cinema* (2013), Ben Murtagh reveals that at least thirty films were made during this period that presented characters that might be easily recognised as of non-normative gender or sexuality (excluding the minor cross-dressing characters that routinely appeared in many sex comedies). Despite Murtagh’s efforts to interrogate both affirmative and negative portrayals of homosexuality, there is a strong sense of the pervasiveness of heteronormativity running through those films. Most of the films presented male homosexuality as coming from active yet sinful same-sex desire. Lesbianism was imagined to

result from the absence of men, or as a temporary reaction to their violent behaviour. At the end of almost all of the films, gay and lesbian characters converted/reverted to heterosexuality, or suffered a tragic death.

The next repressed discourse in relation to the second principle of the nation was violence. The Board of Film Censorship targeted any on-screen criminal acts that “may encourage the audience to sympathise with the perpetrators and the crimes themselves” (my trans.). The Board would also cut parts that showed “executions by any means” and “presentations of violence and cruelty and/or their impacts, which create the impression of sadism” (my trans.). Furthermore, it would reject films “whose narrative and narration feature violence, cruelty, and crime for more than 50 percent, which create the impression that goodness can be defeated by evil” (my trans.). Nevertheless, the Board had to betray their own regulations to release the state-produced film *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984), in spite of the obvious sadistic material that it contained.



Fig. 12. A scene in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* when the daughter of General Ahmad Yani washes her face with the blood of her murdered father.

The film was passed, the Board argued, because the graphic torture and execution of the army generals by the Communists was not to incite the sympathy of the audience towards the torturers but to do exactly the opposite. Moreover, the good military forces eventually defeated the evil Communists in the ending. In other cases, this kind of gory violence would not pass the pre-censorship stages, let alone the later stages.

Furthermore, films were not to portray any weaknesses of the hand of justice. The FC Code pointed out the responsibility of films to exclude “any statements which may lead to the decline of the community’s trust in the organisation of justice” and specifically forbade mocking of “the upholders of law and order” (Sen, *Indonesian* 70). Military and police officers could not be corrupt or killed at the hands of criminals in films. Crimes could only be depicted if they were shown to be punished. In films involving kidnapping, for instance, the victim has to be returned unscathed by the end of the film.

The unity of Indonesia: The unity of Indonesia was mainly reinforced by not allowing any portrayal of social conflicts, as already discussed under the first principle. This anti-conflict attitude applied to contemporary tensions as well as historical conflicts, immediate or far. Historical films in the military era generally ignored the pre-Dutch history of the Indonesian archipelago (Sen, *Indonesian* 81). Discussion of the immediate past, the Sukarno era, was also absent from the New Order cinema. At the beginning, there was almost a total silence about the events of 1965, which seemed surprising amid the extensive anti-communistic rhetoric in other mass media such as the press and television. Aside from filmmakers’ fear of making a ‘wrong’ representation of the event, another reason for this silence was the concern of the government not to depict ‘family quarrels’ (*Indonesia Raya*).

That was why the pre-Dutch history was a very rare subject matter in Indonesian cinema, for it was a history of conflicts, defeats, and conquests of one local kingdom by another. Even if the setting was in the Dutch colonial era, so long as the story depicted a

conflict between local people, that film would not be allowed to continue. *Perang Padri*, a planned film about the history of the Islamic religious wars in West Sumatra during the Dutch colonial era, was stopped at the pre-censorship stages in 1981, for this very reason. The film took its name from the war of the Padri (the Minangkabau Islamic reform movement) against the traditional Minang rulers assisted by the Dutch. If only the script had focused on the later period when the reformers and the rulers eventually aligned themselves against the Dutch, the outcome could have been very different.

Another example of this sentiment can be found in the case of *Max Havelaar* (1976), a Dutch-Indonesian film adaptation of Multatuli's 1859 novel. The novel was frequently praised by freedom fighters for raising people's early consciousness of the evil Dutch colonial system (see Toer). The film tells the story of Lebak, Java, after Max Havelaar, a Dutch officer, has been appointed as the assistant resident. As in the novel, the idealistic assistant resident tries to fight the abuse of power by the *bupati* (the highest native official under Dutch rule) as well as his Dutch superior. The film created quite a controversy in Indonesia, and the Censorship Board refused to release it. Arguably, the main problem is that the adaptation portrays how a feudal native exploits peasant natives. There were also post-colonial concerns in the public debate and the review of the Board at the time. Some critics saw the film as a persistent colonial representation of Indonesia. The head of the Board stated that *Max Havelaar* "gives the strong impression that the real cruelty was from the bupati of Lebak and the Dutch came to protect people" (Sen, *Indonesian* 87).

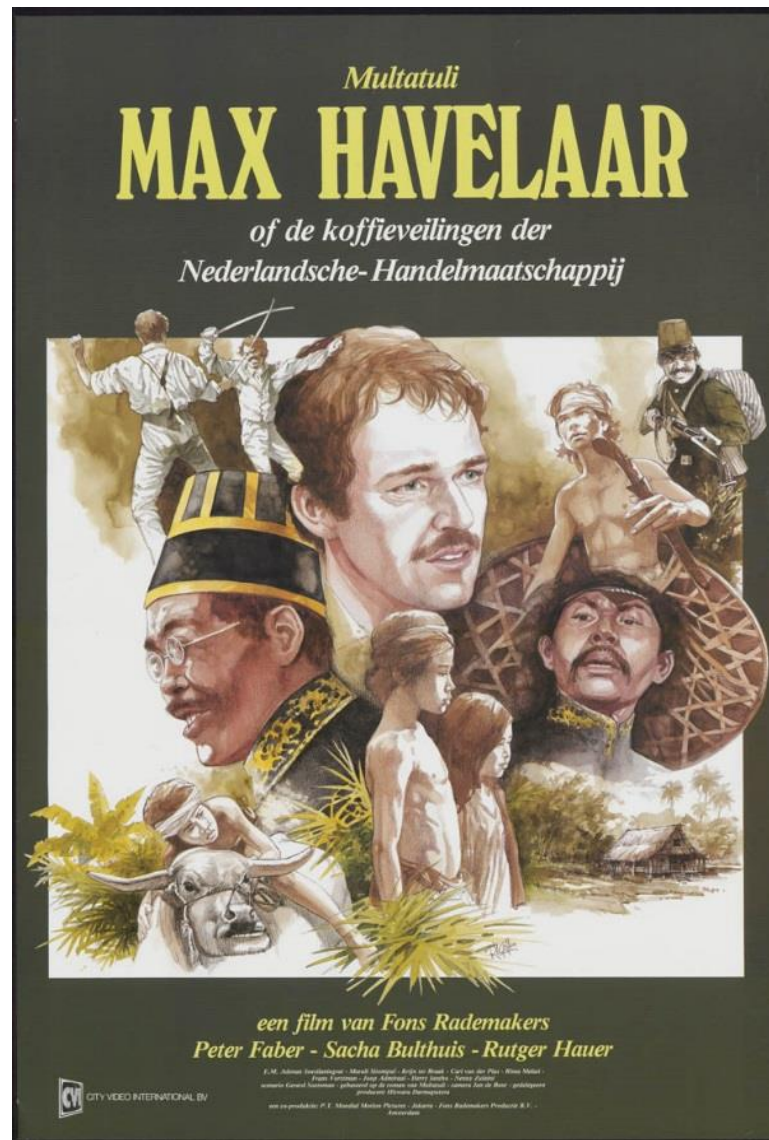


Fig. 13. *Max Havelaar*, a Dutch-Indonesian film adaptation whose screening in Indonesian was held by the Censorship for 10 years due to the negative portrayal of a native leader.

The 1965 massacre was also seen as a family quarrel as opposed to the War of Independence when the Communists and non-Communists together fought other nations (The Netherlands and other Allied nations). When the State Film Corporation decided in 1981 to make the first and only film about the event, General Dwipayana was convinced that this subject matter had to be filmed under close government supervision. When the result was released in 1984, it was quite obvious that the film tried to blame foreign powers for the family quarrel. The first culprit was the People's Republic of China who allegedly

encouraged and armed the PKI. The other culprit was Marxism-Leninism, a foreign ideology that poisoned the originally good members of the Indonesian family.

Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives: The Censorship Guideline's politics section listed political ideologies that were not to be expressed in any form. These included Colonialism, Imperialism, Fascism, and all representations of Communism. It also stated that films would be banned if they were regarded as harmful to "Indonesia's internal or foreign politics" or "in conflict with policies of the government" (Sen, *Indonesian* 70). Here the political interests of the ruling regime were discursively depoliticised as the security of the state and nation. Hence, any political criticism towards the government equated to a threat to the security of the state and nation. The BFC Code further prohibited anything that could cause damage to "persons or institutions associated with the state" or, in other words, government officers (70).

Mass politics was consistently repressed in cinema because it was deeply associated with Sukarno's and the PKI's populism. Highlighting the word 'representatives' in the fourth principle of the nation, the military regime strongly advocated and implemented a full representational democracy in which people could never directly choose leaders and agree/disagree with policies. For rural settings, mass action was also seen as misguided, and related to irrational mystical beliefs that usually caused harm to innocent individuals. The visualisation of mass action was quite typical in every film (Sen, *Indonesian* 121). The action took place in the middle of the night, with a mob of men in dark clothes carrying lit torches. Most frequently these scenes were followed by those of death and destruction. Ironically, this kind of representation has been widely associated by the public with, and in some cases reported by the survivors of the anti-communist campaign as, how the military and anti-communist militia attacked the Communists' dwellings in 1965-6 (see Tempo).

In more ‘serious’ films dealing with social problems, the solution usually came from professionals from big cities (see 1.2.3). The professionals were pictured as non-partisan and their actions were motivated more by a moral/humanitarian sense than a political interest, which was the same political jargon of the ruling party Golongan Karya. This tendency can be seen in films like *Dr. Siti Pertiwi Kembali ke Desa* (1979) and *Perempuan dalam Pasungan* (1980). In the first film, Dr. Siti Pertiwi, a medical graduate from Jakarta, goes to a transmigration area in Sumatra to help people with health problems and superstition. In the second film, an investigative journalist finds and saves an insane woman locked in chains, which was a common practice in ‘backward’ Javanese communities.



Fig. 14. *Perempuan dalam Pasungan*, which portrays the backwardness of the rural lower class and at the same time the political disinterestedness of the urban middle class.

In horror films about witch-hunts, the resolution of the slander that led to mass amok and demobilisation of the masses usually came from a religious teacher from inside or outside the village. Mass power was thus defeated by a superior individual and overcome by religious knowledge. Using the language of Wood and Flinders, a social force was neutralised through a societal and discursive depoliticisation. In both films, the solution came from the top down and not from the masses themselves. It was about 'instruction' from the professionals/Islamic teachers to the masses and not 'deliberation' between the two parties or the masses themselves. This was consistent with the government's discourse on rural audiences; that they were illiterate, unsophisticated, and apolitical.

Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia: In the early years of the Suharto era, the film industry was preoccupied with the promises of economic prosperity and western lifestyles that had been denied during the Sukarno era (Hakim). Many films showed an excessively luxurious lifestyle and cosmopolitanism as represented by titles like *Jakarta-Hongkong-Macao* (1968) and *Honey, Money and Jakarta Fair* (1970). Yet, throughout the 1970s, the concern with continuing poverty and a widening economic gap asserted itself in student politics and film aesthetics. Audiences and filmmakers were both tired of romantic dramas and films picturing "women in nightclubs" (Hakim 8). Successive Indonesian Film Festivals highlighted their hope for a realist depiction of social problems. Soon afterwards, as noted by Gunawan Mohamad in 1974, there was a sharp rise in the number of films that contained some description of the conflict and contrast between the rich and the poor. At the same time, the censorship became increasingly explicit about the exclusion of social conflict. Caught between the censorship and the realist aesthetics, filmmakers developed narrative conventions for representing and correcting the social injustice as they had done earlier with regard to sexuality.

First, the protagonists lived in poverty until their fortunes changed either because they were discovered by rich and generous relatives or they made good on their merit and impressed rich and generous people. Examples of this formula can be found in *Yatim* (1973), *Ratapan Si Miskin* (1974), and *Nasib Si Miskin* (1977). The second convention looked more realistic but no less pro-establishment than the first. This time poor protagonists remained poor and even died at the end, which is somewhat more ‘realistic’. Yet, the poor were denied a space from which they could either understand or speak for their situation. As in the case of *Si Mamad* (1973), a civil servant Mamad commits small-time corruption such as stealing office paper when he must prepare for the expense of the birth of his seventh child. This tortures his conscience and he tries to confess and explain to his superior, who is actually far more corrupt. But the opportunity always seems to elude him and he takes his regret and sadness to the grave. Before and after his death, he has to be represented and absolved by a concerned Dr. Budiman. The poor were thus the objectified heroes; they were only spoken about. The designated heroes were social activists, usually middle-class intelligentsia and professionals.

When the designated heroes failed, God intervened and punished the ‘individual’ (not systemic) oppressors. This divine intervention can be seen in *Perawan Desa* (1978), a film about the rape of a village virgin by a group of rich and well-connected young boys. In the pre-censored version, the rapists are acquitted of the charge and the victim faints in court. The Board of Censorship rejected this ending and asked the filmmaker to change it. The filmmakers then added a seven-minute scene in which the rapists are involved in a terrible car crash, and the film passed the censor. That was the third formula for setting the social justice and an excellent example of discursive depoliticisation.

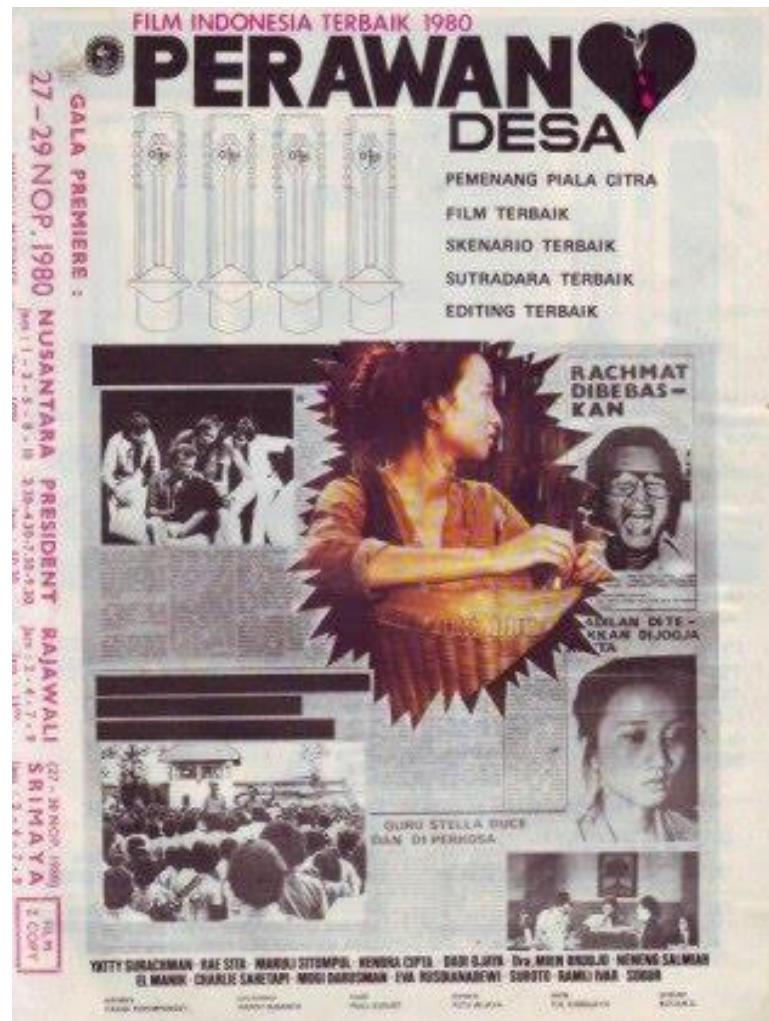


Fig. 15. *Perawan Desa*, an example of how social and individual injustice is solved in the realm of fate (discursive depoliticisation).

In this sub-chapter, I have reviewed the depoliticisation of the film institutions and discourses in the military era, which became the contexts of the first film adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel. It can be deduced from the discussion that all of the film institutions were depoliticised as well as self-depoliticised. This depoliticisation resulted in the repression and representation of certain discourses in films and adaptations such as religious tensions, women's emancipation, local conflicts, political ideologies, and socio-economic gaps. In addition, the issues of post-colonialism regularly appeared in the debates of the film institutions and discursive repressions. In the next section, I will analyse how these contexts influenced the adaptation of the novel.

2.2 Finding *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*

Hitherto, I am still unable to locate and acquire a copy of *Blood and Crown* despite my persistent search and numerous communications with relevant parties such as, to name just a few, Indonesian film researchers, film centres, film communities, TV stations, the parent company of the defunct film company, the family of the late director of the film, and the filmmaker of the second adaptation. The documentation of my written communications can be seen in Appendix B. This situation is, of course, nothing new. David Pierce finds, in 2013, that “only 14% of the feature films produced in the United States during the period 1912–1929 survive in the format in which they were originally produced and distributed” (vii). In “Film Riches, Cleaned Up for Posterity” (2010), Dave Kehr says that “50 percent of American sound films made before 1950 appear to have vanished forever” (par. 4). These circumstances often compel researchers to reconstruct missing films based on the available secondary resources. In *Indonesian Cinema*, for instance, Sen discusses the missing works of Bachtiar Siagiaan, a left-wing film director during the Sukarno era, based on the surviving script, reviews and interviews, and the director’s theoretical writings. Worse than the fate of left-wing books, left-wing films were thoroughly wiped out by the military apparatus.

One of the immediate problems with reconstructing *Blood and Crown* was, however, the scarcity of secondary data. What I had in the beginning was only a JPEG-formatted poster of the film given to me by a film enthusiast from Medan, Sumatera and passing remarks from the critics of the second film adaptation (see 0.2). Nevertheless, on 03 March 2016, I read about the launch of *Indonesia OneSearch*, a digital library network portal that interconnects 25,000 libraries in Indonesia, run by the National Library of Indonesia. Still hoping to find the film, I typed in the title and found one result from the database of the National Library. To my delight, it turned out to be the screenplay of *Blood and Crown* in microfiche format. The script had been freshly photoduplicated, published, and donated by the Library of the

Congress Office in Jakarta for I found another copy in the catalogue of the Library of Congress in Washington. With the help of a deputy at the National Library, I managed to get a pdf-formatted file of the script without having to travel to Indonesia or America and hand-copy or convert the microfiche myself.

It turns out that the disappearance of the film and the subsequent discovery of the script reveal much about attitudes to Indonesian cinema within a national context. The fact that the film is missing despite its relatively recent production and the absence of government banning makes this a very worthwhile case in terms of further understanding the depoliticisation and politicisation of Indonesian cinema in general and film adaptation in particular. The analysis of the screenplay reveals the ‘inner process’ of adaptation and, with regard to this thesis, depoliticisation and repoliticisation. This probably could not be achieved only by comparing the novel (raw material) and the films (finished products). The subsequent analysis of the screenplay will show that the script is responsible for much, if not most, of the depoliticisation in the film. Nevertheless, the same analysis will also reveal that depoliticisation takes place at many levels, involving many parties other than the screenwriters.

In this sub-chapter, I will try to reconstruct and analyse the first adaptation of Tohari’s novel based on the surviving script and other relevant sources. In preparation for that, I will first suggest several possible reasons why *Blood and Crown* has been marginalised and forgotten, and is now missing. This involves an investigation of the archiving and restoration of Indonesian film (adaptation), particularly in terms of their base and superstructure.

2.2.1 Archiving Indonesian Film (Adaptations)

Film archiving and restoration have largely been ignored by scholars of Indonesian film, including, but not limited to, Heider and Sen (see also Hanan; van Heeren; Murtagh;

Heryanto, *Identity*). If they are discussed at all, archiving and restoration are just mentioned as ‘problems’ and have not yet been discussed as ‘factors’. It is my contention that both have played as significant a role as other film sectors in the impasse of Indonesian adaptations and studies. In this section, I will analyse Indonesian film archiving in terms of, adapting the Marxist terminologies, its infrastructure (such as institutions, finance, and collections) and superstructure (ideology, taste, and knowledge). I suggest not a single, determining base and a passive, determined superstructure as classic Marxists posit. Rather, as Raymond Williams, in 1982, proposes:

Now already in Marx himself, in the later correspondence of Engels, and at many points in the subsequent Marxist tradition, qualifications have been made about the determined character of certain superstructural activities. The first kind of qualification had to do with delays in time, with complications, and with certain indirect or relatively distant relationships . . . The second stage was related but more fundamental, in that the process of the relationship itself was more substantially looked at. This was the kind of reconsideration which gave rise to the modern notion of ‘mediation’, in which something more than simple reflection or reproduction—indeed something radically different from either reflection or reproduction—actively occurs. In the later twentieth century there is the notion of ‘homologous structures’, where there may be no direct or easily apparent similarity, and certainly nothing like reflection or reproduction, between the superstructural process and the reality of the base, but in which there is an essential homology or correspondence of structures, which can be discovered by analysis. (4-5)

Base structure: The following analysis of the base structure of Indonesian film archiving and restoration is based on articles, special reports, and interviews in Indonesian

mass media. There are so far two notable institutions for archiving and restoring Indonesian films, namely Sinematek and Jakarta Prima Digital. Sinematek is situated in the Haji Usmar Ismail Film Centre in the Kuningan area, Jakarta and run by the Usmar Ismail Foundation (Saraswati). As of March 2012, Sinematek had approximately 2,700 films in its archive, mostly Indonesian (Setiawati). This included 548 negatives for colour films and eighty-four negatives for black-and-white films (Pasaribu, “Restoring”). The archive obtained films partly from producers and partly from theatre owners, who had gone bankrupt and sold old Indonesian films or donated their collections (Saraswati). The library also held over 15,000 reference works such as books, screenplays, newspaper clippings, and government regulations (*The Jakarta Post*). Other collections included film posters and equipment (Saraswati). The majority of its visitors are researchers and university students but the archive also lends their collections for public events such as film festivals (Saraswati).

Sinematek was established by Misbach Yusa Biran, a film researcher, and Asrul Sani, a film director, on 20 October 1975 (Krismantari, “Memoriam”). Biran had previously set up a similar archive at the Art Institute of Jakarta in the early 1970s (Sembiring, “Saving”). He modelled Sinematek on archives he had visited in Holland while the name itself was inspired by *Cinémathèque Française* in Paris (Setiawati). Jakarta Governor Ali Sadikin provided regular funds from the city’s budget and helped the archive to obtain a financial support from the Ministry of Information. Sinematek was the first film archive in Southeast Asia and the only one in the country until just recently. In 1977, it became a member of the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) (Lutfia).

The archive was formally taken over by the Usmar Ismail Foundation, also headed by Biran, in 1995 (Setiawati). Unfortunately, a 2001 regulation prohibited the government from allocating funds for non-profit organisations; foreign funds also stopped coming in. This led to the archive becoming underfunded and its FIAF membership was threatened (*The Jakarta*

Post). Sinematek received only Rp 17 million (roughly GBP 850) monthly allowance from the National Film Board and the Film Center Foundation (Saraswati). Although the Indonesian government allocated Rp 10 billion (approximately GBP 500,000) to build a new building in 2008, Adi Pranajaya, the head of Sinematek, said “it would be useless to have a new building without the proper management and a solution to the operational problems” (Lutfia par. 10). As of 2012, Sinematek continued to struggle with financial problems; of the estimated Rp 320 million (GBP 16,000) needed to properly store the films in its care and repair damaged reels, it only received a budget of Rp 48 million (GBP 2400) (Goan). Its seventeen staff were paid under Rp 1 million a month (around GBP 50). The operation at the archive slowed down to the point that the founder urged the government to take it over (Setiawati par. 29). This might explain the slow response of the staff to queries, which I myself experienced. Although it had proper temperature and humidity control, the new building’s storage room had poor lighting and, in some places, was covered in mould (*The Jakarta Post*).

Sinematek focuses more on archiving than restoration because the latter needs more skilled staff and a lot of financing. Film restorations, such as of Usmar Ismail's *Lewat Jam Malam* (1954), were entirely funded and carried out by foreign institutions (Siregar, “Restoring”). The archive has also had the legendary director’s 1956 film *Tiga Dara* restored in the Netherlands (Goan). Coinciding with the screening of the restored film in June 2012, Sinematek launched the *Sahabat Sinematek* (Friends of Sinematek) programme to promote the archiving and restoration of local films (Siregar, “Restoring”).

The history of Sinematek offers an interesting case of depoliticisation and politicisation. It started as Biran’s private project (a discursive politicisation) and later developed into a social project when it became part of the Usmar Ismail Foundation (societal politicisation). When Biran asked for the blessing of the government, what he was actually

trying to do was to promote the issue of archiving and restoration to the governmental level (governmental politicisation). Interestingly, the government helped but at the same time kept it at arm's length (governmental depoliticisation) perhaps because the sector is considered not too important to be directly controlled. When the post-military government decided to prohibit Sinematek from receiving government funds, this was a governmental depoliticisation *par excellence*, which could be further traced back to the requirement of the IMF, the accused hand of the western empires, to liberalise the once protectionist post-colonial country. While this depoliticisation threatened and many times killed off non-profit organisations, it helped private businesses to thrive.

There are now a few Indonesian private companies competing for film archiving and restoration, one of which is Jakarta Prima Digital (henceforth JPD). JPD was founded in 2012 but its owner has been in the film industry for more than thirty years (Harahap, "Cerita"). As a business, it has a competitive edge over Sinematek Indonesia as well as their direct competitors. It began with seven people in the Fatmawati Area, Jakarta and moved to a six-story building in the Kebayoran Lama Area. As of 2016, it employed thirty skilled staff working in several departments such as Repair, Scan, Audio Repair, Preset-Plugins, Manual Repair, Subtitle, Quality Control, and Mastering. At the beginning, all of the machinery was purchased from one Swedish vendor but this has now been combined with equipment made by JPD themselves. It also started with a work flow from Europe and other countries until it found its own model.

Not only does it claim to have the most complete equipment in the country, JPD also believes that it is now ready to compete with foreign companies in terms of speed and quality. To begin with, foreign companies might feel reluctant to do the job. According to Edwin Theisalia, the Technical Manager, foreign companies are used to working with films with approximately twenty percent damage whereas most Indonesian films suffer from ninety

percent damage (Harahap, “Indonesia”). Andre Blackham, the Production Manager, adds that there is no proper celluloid storage facility in the country whereas Indonesia is a fungi-friendly environment (Harahap, “Tak”). To put this into perspective, *Catatan Si Boy* (1987) and *Saur Sepuh* (1988), the most famous films of the military era, are the most damaged collections that they have (Harahap, “Indonesia”). If the famous films are in such bad condition, one can assume the worst about much less well-known films such as *Blood and Crown*.

Producers tend to be cautious when JPD expresses its wish to restore their films. They prefer to sell out rather than restore their assets (Harahap, “Cerita”). In addition to producers, JPD also searches for films from former mobile cinema owners in the countryside, who became bankrupt after the introduction of private TV stations in the 1990s (Harahap, “Tak”). The condition of the celluloids is naturally worse than those they purchase directly from producers. Usually, the ex-mobile cinema owners only have the positive prints of the films and most of them have been carelessly cut. As a result, there are duration lags that JPD must fill in from other sources.

In total, there are around seven hundred films in JPD’s archive, four hundred of which are fully owned by the company, while the rest are licensed from the producers (Harahap, “Tak”). As of March 2016, eighty films had been fully restored. Their oldest collection is *Ketemu Jodoh* (1973) while the newest is *Surat dari Praha* (2016). It might be surprising that relatively newer films also badly need restoration. *Ada Apa Dengan Cinta?* (2002), the undisputed symbol of the Indonesian film revival in the 2000s, has been undergoing restoration due to poor storage. If the new, critically acclaimed, and popular film suffers from negligence, *Blood and Crown* would have no better chance.

JPD has just signed a contract with Flik TV, a channel under paid Indihome TV, to screen the restored films so that they can be enjoyed by the wider public (Harahap, “Tak”).

This has given the company even more of a competitive edge over Sinematek and its direct competitors because the latter do not have as wide access to the public. This contract has naturally generated a large amount of revenue for JPD, which will enable them to find, archive, restore, and distribute more films. Every month they introduce around twenty new titles in thirty films being screened on Flik TV. Following the government's regulation, restored films must undergo the scrutiny of the Institute of Film Censorship again because they are now being screened for TV consumption.

From the comparison between Sinematek and JPD above, it can be seen that governmental depoliticisation in a developing country like Indonesia threatens non-profit organisations like Sinematek simply because the public is not ready to financially sustain a societal asset. At the same time, this brings great opportunities to private enterprises. This is not necessarily negative because 'capitalism', as JPD has demonstrated, can provide better service and wider access than government-owned institutions and non-profit organisations. The classic problem is, however, that people must pay for the service and access and not everyone can afford this, as only a few people in Indonesia can afford pay-TV.

Although there has been progress with the existence of private archiving and restoration companies, there is still a lot to catch up. The poor base structure of film archiving and restoration is one reason why film adaptations are rarely re-adapted in Indonesia. As I stated in Introduction, *The Dancer* is one of very few novels to have been adapted more than once and perhaps the only political novel to have been adapted twice in Indonesia. If a filmmaker never watches or hears about a film adaptation, the possibility of a re-adaptation of that work is understandably very low. When a re-adaptation materialises, there are inexplicable discontinuities between that adaptation and the earlier version because the second adapter basically works from scratch. This in turn does not help Indonesian adaptation studies and researchers.

Superstructure: In *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film* (2007), Marnie Hughes Warrington succinctly concludes “preservation is not determined solely by the longevity of media. More important, arguably, are human decisions” (191-2). I will now shift my attention to the superstructure of Indonesian film archiving, particularly the dominant perspectives on popular films and film adaptations, the categories to which *Blood and Crown* is discursively grouped. As I mentioned earlier, the superstructure is not necessarily a direct reflection of the infrastructure but is related, mediated, and corresponding. Just as in the West, there has been a great, continuing debate concerning popular and non-popular arts in Indonesia although it started relatively late, in the late 1980s. As usual, it began in Indonesian literary circles (see, for instance, Heryanto, *Perdebatan*) and much later was continued by Indonesian film communities. In general, the debates in both disciplines are fairly similar. While literary critics struggle with the issue of Indonesian canons and popular literature, film critics debate the issue of Indonesian auteur and genre films.

Nevertheless, there are several differences between the two debates. First, the participants in the film debate are much fewer and less diverse because the country is still lacking film scholars and critics. Second and relatedly, the debates are less well-known because they rarely come outside of film circles. What comes out in mass media are mostly film reviews. Literary debates, however, have been dominating the ‘cultural pages’ in Indonesian newspapers and magazines since the pre-independence era. Third, at least judging from the available academic writings, foreign critics such as Heider tend to advocate the significance of popular films whereas Indonesian critics such as Salim Said and Misbach Biran are inclined to maintain that the dichotomy of popular and non-popular films is unproblematic, and continue it.

Problematically, Biran is the same Misbach Yusa Biran who founded and led Sinematek for a long time. This, I argue, has significantly influenced the base structure of Indonesian film archiving. Once a director, Biran quitted that job in the 1970s and focused on scriptwriting and archiving because he was disappointed with what he saw as the commercialisation of Indonesian cinema (Krisnantari “Memorian”). He also rejected films made by Chinese Indonesians in the colonial and early Independence eras as pioneering Indonesian films because he believed that they were only focused on making money (*Sejarah* 45). One can only imagine what kind of collections he and his staff have preferred to search for and store in Sinematek. The institution proudly claims on its website that it does not discriminate between popular and non-popular films:

Unlike film archives in general, which merely aim to preserve quality works, Sinematek Indonesia was deliberately created as a medium for the development of national films. Therefore, its priority is domestic films and on gathering information and data useful to that purpose.

Therefore, types of film collections and their related documentation become different from general film archives in the world. Sinematek Indonesia will keep any acquired Indonesian films without selection because, no matter how bad a film is, it still has value as research material for national film interests, even for different disciplines. (Sinematek Indonesia, my trans.)

The passage above apparently contains a paradox. On the one hand, Sinematek seems to be very open-minded but, on the other, it still maintains the dichotomy of high- and low-quality films. This might not be a major problem if the institution had abundant resources because, in that situation, it could acquire both (what it deems to be) good and bad films. Yet, when resources are limited, as Sinematek has been experiencing for years, it is compelled to prioritise and its priority evidently is what it considers good films. Therefore, it proposes to

restore *Lewat Jam Malam*, a film made for a festival by Usmar Ismail, the father of Indonesian Cinema, rather than popular films from the same era.

The attitude of the brand-new JPD is markedly different from that of Sinematek. This can be detected, for instance, from the mission statement on the company's website:

For our love of Indonesian Cinema, our initiative here at JKT DIGITAL is to Archive, Restore, Produce and Distribute Film.

The first Indonesian film was produced in 1926. Since then Celluloid has been a popular form for producing film or even documentation. May it be documentation during the war or even a presidential speech. All film produced has Cultural and Historical values that need to be safeguarded.

It is the responsibility of government and private bodies as well as individuals that are involved with audiovisual materials to preserve the history and culture of the Indonesian nations before they decay and are lost forever. Those materials need to be shared and distributed to the public for information, education as well as entertainment. (Jakarta Prima Digital)

There is no paradox or implicit dichotomy of good and bad films in the statement above. JPD goes even further and challenges genre dichotomies such as “film or even documentation” and “documentation during the war or even a presidential speech”. This anti-hierarchical attitude also resonates in its interviews with the media. In one of these interviews, the Production Manager argues that the popular films of the 1980s were seriously made, with professional actors and actresses, and better stories (Harahap “Zaman”).

The dichotomy of popular and non-popular arts passes down to the realm of Indonesian film adaptation. Below I will outline the cultural status of film adaptations and adaptation studies in Indonesia relative to literature and films and their respective studies. This scheme is of course arbitrary and is very much influenced by the ‘pop’ factor. As it is

As a practice, the adaptation of literary works to films started as early as the late colonial era with the production of *Njai Dasima* (1929). From the very beginning, there was a close relationship between film and literature because most Indonesian filmmakers had literary backgrounds. Teeuw argues that Indonesian men of letters “were fascinated by this new medium which promised so much-especially in a land where . . . contact with the (not yet) reading public proved to be such a great problem” (143). Another factor is the lack of formal film training at the time, while literary education had already been established. Although there are quite a few formally trained filmmakers these days, the number of literary authors who are involved in film making remains significant. This symbiosis has given a cultural legitimacy to films, particularly film adaptations, and wider audiences and larger finance to literary authors. The former represents the issue of cultural capital while the latter deals with the business of economic capital, both of which are outlined by Bourdieu and discussed by Hutcheon in their respective works.

The post-independence era saw a growing number of film adaptations, especially during the heyday of Suharto’s regime or the military era (the 1980s). Local film industry, as well as movie theatres, experienced a boom never seen before and not yet surpassed even now (see Tjasmadi). The number of Indonesian film adaptations also grew significantly during this period. Most of them were popular films based on popular novels, including the award-winning film adaptations that I mentioned in the first sub-chapter. Along with the collapse of national cinema in the 1990s, the number of film adaptations also plummeted. The revival of Indonesian cinema in the 2000s has also revived the production of Indonesian film adaptations and, just as in the 1980s, most of them are adaptations of popular novels.

As far as I am concerned, I have not found any Indonesian adaptation that is considered to have surpassed the cultural status of its source text, that is, from a popular literary work to a non-popular film. When a non-popular book is adapted into a non-popular

film, it usually garners a critical reception but never to the point that the adaptation is considered better than the book. Usually, this type of adaptation also does poorly in the box office, which can be seen, for instance, from the cases of *Atheis* (1974), *Max Havelaar* (1975), and *Sang Penari* (2011). When a popular literary work is adapted into a popular film, it may or may not receive a critical reception but it will typically succeed in the market. This can be seen from *Pacar Ketinggalan Kereta* (1989), *Taksi* (1990), and *Laskar Pelangi*, which won many awards as well as public attention. Due to their critical and/or commercial success, these adaptations can easily be found in Indonesian film centres and sellers.

In both cases, adaptation is seen as a quite ‘tolerable’ bastardisation and therefore does not create uproar. Uproar usually takes place when a non-popular literary work is adapted or depoliticised, so to speak, into a popular film. This can be seen, for instance, from the case of *Roro Mendut* (1982), a film adaptation of Y. B. Mangunwijaya’s novel with the same title. The novel is based on an old Javanese folk tale in which Roro Mendut and her lover Pronocitro commit suicide as their love is thwarted by Tumenggung Wiroguno, a Javanese lord who defeats the Pati region and takes away Roro Mendut as one of his war spoils. Mangunwijaya created a different ending in his novel in which the lovers die together on Wiroguno’s dagger as a sign of optimism and resistance to power. The filmmakers preferred the folk tale ending, which created a hot debate with the novelist who saw it as a commercialisation.

Another example is *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck* (2013), which created a controversy simply because of its poster. The Minang ethnic group accused the poster of rape against Hamka’s novel because the character of Hayati is a strongly religious Minang girl and thus would never wear an open dress as on the poster. This kind of adaptation is normally not as successful in the Indonesian Film Festival. Nevertheless, these black sheep of Indonesian film adaptations can easily be found and/or purchased due to their commercial success. *Blood*

and Crown, another black sheep, has also attracted condemnation like *Roro Mendut* and *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck*, but it did not succeed commercially like its counterparts. While a successful black sheep tends to be forgiven and celebrated, a failed black sheep is totally forgotten.

The fate of adaptation studies in Indonesia is no better, if not worse, than that of film adaptations. The discipline is less well-known than film studies, which has currently become the darling of arts and humanities faculties. At the same time, it is far less established than literary studies, which has been around since the Dutch colonisers introduced education to indigenous people in the late nineteenth century. Institutionally, adaptation studies along with its teachers and researchers belong to departments of literature or departments of film. Based on my research, there is no research centre and/or resource centre focusing on this hybrid discipline. Nor are there any journals, conferences, seminars, or other academic forums.

Relatedly, it is still difficult to find this subject when one browses books, theses, and dissertations in Indonesian universities, including the top colleges in humanities. Accordingly, it is far more challenging to find Indonesian adaptation studies in the international arena. Out of the few available studies, most of them still deal with formal rather than historical aspects of adaptation, which can be seen in my review of *The Dancer* in the introductory chapter, as well as studies of other adaptations such as those by Umilia Rokhani (2008), Diki Mutaqin (2016), and Ayu Wardhani (2013). The attention to formal aspects itself is not a matter of individual preference or expertise but rather reflects a general impasse in Indonesian adaptation studies. Last but most relevant, most of them still focus on critically acclaimed or commercially successful adaptations and none discusses a critical and commercial failure such as *Blood and Crown*, which I attempt to do in the following section.

2.2.2 The Recovered Script: Double Depoliticisation

The following section will present a political reading of the film script of *Blood and Crown*, the first adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel *The Dancer*. The main aim of this section is to explore how the politicisation and depoliticisation of Indonesian cinema as previously discussed affect the adaptation script. There are three important subject matters in the screenplay, namely, religion/tradition, crime/juvenile delinquency, and social discontent/reform. These subjects traverse the three-stage script as well as embodying the depoliticisation and politicisation in the text. I will also show that the script contains several cases of what I call 'double depoliticisation'.

The screenplay consists of 121 scenes while, per its filmography, the film lasts for 96 minutes. The narration of the script is omniscient while the narrative is linear and chronological. The script is well-written and arguably better-written than the script of the second adaptation. What I mean by 'better' here refers mainly to the intrinsic properties of the story. The language flows almost without awkward interruptions from foreign/loan words as in the script of the second film. The story can stand on its own, meaning that readers can enjoy it even without reading the novel or watching the film. The same thing can hardly be said about the script of the second film because the latter contains lots of montages, which are more meaningful when watched than read. Furthermore, the screenplay of the first film is also more focused because it covers only the first book of the trilogy whereas the script of the second film attempts to narrate all three books. Edwin Theisalia, the film restorer, has a more or less similar impression of the narratives of military-era films (Harahap, "Zaman").

The fact that the screenplay only covers the first book of the trilogy, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (*The Dancer of Paruk Village*), is because the film was produced in 1983, two years before the publication of the second book, *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (*A Shooting Star at Dawn*) and four years before the publication of the third book *Jantera Bianglala* (*The*

Rainbow's Arc). As a result, the narrative focuses on the relations between Srintil and her community and has no account of the Communists, the military, or the professionals. This immediately dismisses the common criticism mounted against the film that it shied away from the forbidden content on the Communists and the anti-Communist campaign (see 0.2). As with the second film, the narrative of the first film can also be divided into three stages, namely, 1) Srintil's and Rasus' childhoods, 2) their resistance towards the tradition exploitation, and 3) their liberation.

The first stage: What seems missing immediately from the first stage of *Blood and Crown* is the background story of Srintil's and Rasus' families. It is not explained why Srintil is living only with her grandfather, Sakarya. As for Rasus, it is only mentioned that he comes from another area. Thus, the film suppresses what unites and at the same time disunites these two children. As the novel tells us, Rasus' parents were killed by a poisonous *tempe bongkrek* (a coconut presscake) unknowingly made and sold by Srintil's parents, who also ate it and died to prove their innocence. It is not immediately clear why this is missing in the film but this might be related to the infamous case of coconut presscake poisoning in Java throughout the 1970-1980s, in which hundreds of people were killed (see Shurtleff and Aoyagi). Although this kind of poisoning has been recorded since the colonial era, and the poisoning in the story actually takes place in the pre-military era, the military regime might have been concerned that this story would be associated with the more recent tragedies.

This case seriously embarrassed the military regime because it showed that the people were still poor and took their chances by eating this dangerous food, thus undermining the military's claim to have brought prosperity and equality to all people of Indonesia. This kind of exclusion or self-exclusion is perhaps the most traditional act of depoliticisation because it is based on fear, a primordial force, and relies on official state apparatus. The traditional depoliticisation is most prominent in non-democratic countries like New Order Indonesia.

This begins with a rather oversensitive assumption that the issue being censored is political whereas that might not be the case, as in the case of the coconut presscake.

In general, the script does not contain as much religious content as the novel but is less secular than the second film. Kejawenism occupies an important, if not central, place in the film. In a nutshell, this film tells about how Kejawenism is exploited by some strong persona within and without the community of belief for their personal benefit at the expense of the weak members of the community. In the script, Sakarya and Srintil, the voice of true Kejawenism in the novel, are characterised as weak and obedient to the whims of the Kartarejas, the face of the corrupt Kejawenism in the book. Although criticised by Rasus, no alternative discourse to that of Kejawenism is offered. There is neither mention of Islam nor a subtle reference to it. This is not surprising because at the time Islam, even the novelist's moderate brand of it, was still considered the second biggest threat after Communism by the government. Kejawenism, on the other hand, was generally considered apolitical and harmless. So, the film was a warning against the politicisation of Kejawenism and at the same time a further marginalisation of the community.

Despite its focus on a local culture, the language spoken in the film is overwhelmingly standard Indonesian. It does not bother to insert Banyumasan words here and there as the novel and the second film adaptation do. This phenomenon is not unique because most military-era films also implemented the same monolingual approach, partly because of a business motive to reach as many Indonesian viewers as possible, and partly due to the government's policy. As described by Heryanto in "Then There were Languages" (2006), in line with its uniformity spirit, the regime actively campaigned for the use of standard Indonesian many times at the expense of foreign and local languages. The marginalisation of local languages and the promotion of standard languages were both an act of depoliticisation. In the former case, the languages were deemed improper to be used in

governmental and social spaces because they were backward and divisive. In the latter case, *Bahasa Indonesia* was promoted as progressive and uniting whereas, as Phillipson shows in *Linguistic Imperialism*, any language choice is fundamentally political because there is no intrinsically or extrinsically superior language.

The Srintil of the first film is closer to the Srintil of the second film than to that of the novel. She perfectly fulfils the archetype of ‘damsel in distress’ and, to some extent, goes further than that. To start with, she is too beautiful for her surroundings just as a princess in the middle of a forest (Snow White) or in the kitchen (Cinderella). The character of Srintil is played by a famous Indonesian bombshell of the 1980s: Enny Beatrice. Beatrice is only one of many Indo-Eurasian actresses who have become the standard of beauty and dominated Indonesian films and television shows. This standard has transcended any demand of any genre and story. Srintil, for instance, is supposed to be Javanese-looking. This Indo-Eurasian standard of beauty is not exclusive to females, but is also found in male casts. Rasus, the main male character in the film, is also played by an Indo-Eurasian-looking actor: Ray Sahetapy.

Several critics have discussed this phenomenon in relation to post-colonialism such as Virginia Hooker (1993), Laurie Sears (1996), and Rosalind Hewett (2015). The casting of Indo-Eurasian players reflects the ambivalent attitude of the Indonesian post-colonial subjects to the old and new western empires. On the one hand, the military government, followed by the public, regularly talked about the importance of the national identity as opposed to the ‘evil and danger of westernisation’. On the other hand, they seemed to have no problem in receiving financial and military support from the western powers and adopting many western standards, including in regard to beauty. The fact that the government and society accepted rather than actively debated this ambivalence is in itself a clear symptom of depoliticisation.

The second stage: The turning point in the narrative is when Srintil is chosen by the elders as a new ronggeng. So passive is she that Srintil is completely unaware of her distressful situation. It is Rasus, a male character, who makes her realise her situation as well as initiating and executing her liberation. Far more than the novel, the first adaptation fits what Hughes-Freeland calls the “New Order’s representational patterns of female experience” in that it pictures “the female dancer as a victim who can only be saved by the agency of males” (145). Furthermore, Srintil also convincingly fulfils a common representation of women in military-era cinema as identified by Sen:

Dozens of films in which female presence dominated the screen were drawn to my attention. My point, however, is not that women are absent, but indeed that they are emphatically presented to be seen, and so that the film is seen (sold). Some genres of Indonesian films are precisely about seeing the woman, but not about the woman seeing or speaking. (*Indonesian* 134).

What Sen proposed was ground-breaking at the time because for the first time she drew the attention of Indonesian film critics to the ‘quality’ rather than the ‘quantity’ of female characters in Indonesian cinema. Although her presence, or to be precise her sensual body, dominates the screen, Srintil hardly speaks throughout the film. In that manner, her potential as a rebel in the novel is completely erased.

Here the concept of ‘under erasure’ as discussed in Chapter One comes in handy again. Srintil’s under erasure implies a depoliticisation because it reinforces rather than challenges the ruling discourse on good Indonesian women as being reproductive rather than productive, feminine rather than masculine, and silent rather than outspoken (Sen, *Indonesian* 131-156). Gatot Prakosa, a leading Indonesian filmmaker, suggests that this ruling discourse is a product of Western colonialism because “many traditional cultures of Indonesia accept a whole range of combinations of masculine and feminine characteristics” (Sen, *Indonesian*

136; see also Murtagh 6-7). What Prakosa criticises is the binary opposition that has characterised the western thought for ages, including the discourses of colonialism/orientalism, such as west versus east, western women versus eastern women, and outspoken versus silent. Ironically, post-colonial subjects like the Indonesian military regime and filmmakers continued these reductionist colonial discourses rather than opposing them because, as their ex-colonisers had found earlier, these discourses were useful for subduing the others, particularly women. This is a case of what I call ‘double depoliticisation’, wherein a similar issue is depoliticised consecutively or simultaneously by the empires and the post-colonial subjects for a similar purpose. In this particular case, the issue is on women and the empires refer to the old western powers who consecutively colonised the archipelago for more than three-hundred and fifty years (the Portuguese, the British, and the Dutch). What is important here is the fact that the Indonesian subjects were not passively corrupted by the legacy of the past colonialism but actively did take advantage of it after the independence.

This presented-to-be-seen mode is most obvious in prostitution films, where filmmakers could safely expose and sell female sexuality. The Board of Film Censorship was lenient towards this kind of film because the exposed women were prostitutes and thus an example of what Indonesian women must avoid. Nevertheless, *Blood and Crown* is not a prostitution film *par excellence* despite the strong association between ronggeng and prostitution. The Srintil of the first film has not become a full ronggeng yet because she has not passed the Buka Klambu ceremony and slept with men outside marriage. She is still in the process of becoming a prostitute. Her body is exposed and sold in the film under another pretext, namely, a rape attempt.

It is safe to say that the screenplay does not significantly embellish the sexual content of the novel as the critics suggest about the film (see 0.2). Aside from Srintil’s erotic dancing, sexual scenes only take place when Dower is about to rape Srintil, and when Sulam is having

sex with an unnamed married woman from Paruk. The former scene confirms Heider's general hypothesis of sexuality in Indonesian cinema, that is, it should be framed as sadism or rape (66). Yet, the latter scene specifically reinforces the novel's denigration of Paruk's sexuality, as it portrays the open marriage practice in the community, which the novel condemns (see 1.2.1). As can be seen in Sulam's scene with a woman of Paruk:

Sulam is opening his clothes while there is a kebaya of a woman on the floor.

Sulam is smiling at the woman sitting on the bed. The woman is releasing her corset, her body is supple and her gesture is provocative:

Sulam : Your husband is kind, letting her wife stay overnight here.

But I don't know if his wife is as kind . . .

Paruk Woman : All women of Paruk only have one wish, how to satisfy herself and him who wants her. (Riyadi, Atmowiloto, and Suhendro 32, my trans.)

In general, the representation of sexuality in the script is depoliticising because, first, it merely supports rather than challenges the discourse of sexuality in the novel and the military era. Furthermore, as the critics suggest about the film, it helps divert attention from the more political content of the book.

Judging by the low intensity of the sexual representations in the script, it is likely that the real diversion came from outside the scriptwriting division. The screenplay was jointly written by three screenwriters: Rachmat Ryadi, Satmowi Atmowiloto, and Eddy Suhendro. All of them were then young writers and *Blood and Crown* was either their first or second screenplay. Eddy Suhendro and Satmowi Wiloto turned out to be prolific writers and Suhendro won an award for the original screenplay for *Suami* (1988). Ahmad Tohari said in a seminar in 2016 that he was quite satisfied with the script and knew the writers personally.

Yet, he lamented that, in the film making, the director was the decision maker, thus implicitly accusing Yazman Yazid in regard to the sexualisation of the first adaptation. It is quite easy to agree with Tohari's accusation because Yazid is known to have directed many sex comedies throughout his entire career. Nevertheless, if one looks at his filmography closely, he made those films long after the production of *Blood and Crown*, which was only his second film. In fact, his first film was an award-winning sex-less drama on child psychology. The director of cinematography, however, was a much more experienced figure in the film industry and a veteran of sex comedies. Before *Blood and Crown*, Anthony Depary had shot eight films, most of which were sex comedy flicks such as *Inem Pelayan Sexy 2*, *Karminem*, and *Jalal Kawin Lagi* (1977). Similarly, Bambang Trilaksono was a seasoned artistic director with sixteen films under his belt by 1983. His *Kutukan Nyai Roro Kidul* (1979) was one of the most sexual films of that era. Before *Blood and Crown*, he was involved in the production of a sex comedy entitled *Hidung Belang Kena Batunya* (1982). Josephus Adisubrata, a journalist turned film producer, might have played a key role in the sexualisation of the film. Before 1983, he produced one to two films a year and all of them consistently won national awards, which in Indonesia would not normally be given to sexual films. In 1983, however, he suddenly released four films with the same genre of prostitution, namely, *Blood and Crown*, *Kadarwati*, *Johanna*, and *Yang*. Moreover, he employed the same screenwriters for all four films. This production increase, genre selection, and labour efficiency indicate a strong commercialisation push by the producer and his production company, Gramedia Film. The now defunct company was owned by the largest media conglomerate in Indonesia, Kompas Gramedia Group, whose media have long been known as a 'good boy' of the military regime as well as the subsequent governments.

Due to the absence of Communists and professionals, the other antagonists become more marked in the first adaptation. Sulam and Dower signify two less dangerous enemies of

the military regime. Sulam represents the thugs, known locally as *preman*, who live off small-time crime like extortion. As portrayed in the documentary *The Act of Killing* (2015), the regime used the thugs from the beginning of their reign, initially to kill the Communists and later to hit anyone critical towards the establishment. The end goal was to make the terror appear as a horizontal conflict rather as governmental suppression. The relations grew weary at the beginning of the 1980s because the thugs grew out control, “taking crime into a new, organized, and supra-local realm” (Barker, “State” 11).

Joshua Barker, in 2009, postulates that “as the social distance between classes breaks down, the anxiety felt by members of the middle class about their changing status is manifest not in a discourse about class relations but indirectly in a discourse about crime” (“Introduction” 268). Citing James Siegel’s research, he notices a similar pattern in 1980s Indonesia, where fears about social revolution and a more general menace came to be displaced by fears of the thugs who came from the streets but were upwardly mobile. The military regime politicised the thugs as a threat to the national security just it had done earlier with the Communists, albeit with different purposes. While the politicisation of the Communists in the late 1960s was carried out to establish a new order, that of the thugs in the early 1980s was to reinforce the order. Apparently, this governmental politicisation of criminals did not occur only in Indonesia but also in many post-colonial countries such as, just to name a few, Colombia, South Africa, Afghanistan, and, very recently, the Philippines. The politicisation typically served as a prelude to a depoliticising response aimed at addressing the now political problem. Each of the countries had its own techniques and strategies for removing the threat; some were violent and others were not. In the case of Indonesia, the politicisation of the *preman* provided a pretext to a campaign of mysterious killings in which paramilitary forces hunted down and murdered recidivists and others considered by the state apparatus to be habitual criminals (Barker, *State*).

It should be noted that the scriptwriters felt it necessary to mention that Dawuan Market, Sulam's domain of power, is far from the city and control of the police. As mentioned in the first sub-chapter, military-era films were not allowed to undermine the authority and capability of law enforcement. To show that blatant extortion took place while law enforcement officers were around would surely have betrayed this guideline. This can be seen from the following dialogue:

- Vegetables Seller : Doing business here is difficult . . .
- Chillies Seller : But where else can we go?
- Vegetables Seller : Why is there no market other than this Dawuan Market?
- Chillies Seller : How about moving to the city? It's secure, the police are there.
- Vegetables Seller : You're crazy! It takes two-days-and-two-nights walking to reach the city. My vegetables will be rotten by the time I sell them. (Riyadi, Atmowiloto and Suhendro 32, my trans.)

In the novel and the second film, Dawuan is a city. Not only does it have the police but it also has a military headquarters, which not every city in Indonesia has. This village-isation of Dawuan reflects a particular attitude towards the city and village during the military era. This is made clearer by the ending of the film.

Meanwhile, Dower represents one of the illegitimate children of the regime. The regime's materialistic developmentalism, combined with a lack of political channels, brought into being rebellious yet apolitical juveniles. Juvenile delinquency was one of the favourite themes of Indonesian films at the time, including film adaptations (Heider 43). In terms of perceived threats, rebellious teenagers were nothing compared to the Communists and thugs.

The regime concurrently politicised and depoliticised the issue of juvenile delinquency. In their comments in mass media, government officers regularly politicised it as a product of westernisation. At the same time, juvenile delinquency as a side effect of the regime's capitalism and political repression was thoroughly suppressed. Instead, government apparatus demoted the issue as a social or individual crisis and preached the importance of religion and family in facing this problem (Thong 135-7). This is governmental and societal depoliticisation, at once, because the supposedly governmental responsibility is being transferred to social and individual hands.

The characterisation of the hero of the film is typical and unique at the same time. On the one hand, just like typical heroes in films during the military era, Rasus is an outsider. He is not a native son of the village. Therefore, he is criticising the sexual belief of the village from the very beginning, without having to experience an enlightenment from Dawuan as the same character in the novel and the second adaptation:

Darsun : You will never understand, Rasus, because you are not the offspring of people from this area. Every offspring of Kyai Secamanggala understands, including myself. All people of Paruk respect a ronggeng, moreover his spirit wants her . . .

Rasus : But Kyai is long dead. He won't be able to do anything again.

Darsun : He is dead, but his spirit still exists. His spirit still protects this village. All his offspring believe in this, Rasus. He was the patriarch of Paruk village. He will always be here to protect his offspring.

Rasus : I don't believe it. (Riyadi, Atmowiloto and Suhendro

20, my trans.)

On the other hand, Rasus seems to be a different kind of social reformer of rural society in Indonesian cinema. Although from outside the village, Rasus is neither a preacher nor a professional. Yet, this is just a small variation rather than a subversion of widely-accepted social reformers. In general, Rasus is a depoliticised hero of the film.

In many ways, *Blood and Crown*, particularly through the actions of Rasus, falls outside of the domain of political drama and falls into a local action genre called *silat*. In general, *silat* is “used for the Indonesian versions of the general East Asian martial arts” (Heider 39). Normally, in *silat* films a distressed main character will be saved by a hermit and coached physically, mentally, and spiritually before he comes back for revenge. But this does not happen with Rasus in this script. He is already ‘made’ and preparing his revenge in the jungle all on his own. His exploits in the jungle might easily remind the spectators of the adventure of John Rambo in *Rambo: First Blood* (1982), which gained immense popularity in Indonesia and happened to be released one year before *Blood and Crown*. As I stated in 0.1, although the cultural productions in post-colonial countries might be created in response to their own needs, they are never immune from the influences of the old and new empires. There is a fundamental homology or correspondence of structure between the Indonesian and American films.

Rambo itself is a depoliticising film not only in that it portrays the Vietnam War as a theatre of American individual heroism instead of an international political conflict with ugly manoeuvres, but also because it represses the deep division and profound crisis within the American population. In their 1990 observation of Vietnam War films, Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud assert, “the wish to uncover, to know, and to critique is clearly at work, but so also is the wish to rationalize, to repress, and to exorcise” (1). Juxtaposing these films and their Second World War predecessors, they find that many Vietnam War films repress

internal conflicts in soldier communities. While internal conflicts within a group of American soldiers under combat conditions were a constant element of Second World War filmic narratives, these differences were employed to “make the point that only by working together could Americans hope to defeat their common enemies” (5). In Vietnam films like *Platoon* (1986) and *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), working together is not presented as a realistic model. Internal divisions among American fighting men now cause violence and death, and this implies the lack of purpose about the war and the depth of social disintegration. Fighting alone, as Rambo does, becomes a viable option to obscure those challenges. In a similar fashion, Rasus must fight Sulam and his gang alone although he clearly has followers in Paruk, particularly the youngsters. The New Order government would not allow filmic representations of group conflicts because these might have suggested a social disorder rather than a mere crime.

Dittmar and Michaud further identify certain types of films that appeared in the post-Second World War era but are curiously absent from the post-Vietnam War period, including the ‘command level’ films. Those films were meant to explain ‘the big picture’ to American people; their task was to help audiences understand and accept the sacrifices of American soldiers within the larger context of overcoming the global ideological and territorial ambition of America’s enemies. Yet, precisely because this model would inevitably reveal America’s own global ambition during the period of the Vietnam War, the big picture remains off-screen. Many Vietnam War films, including *Rambo*, “place themselves squarely at ground level, focusing on the situation of men in combat” (6). Comparably, most Indonesian silat films like *Blood and Crown* focused on fighting scenes to avoid the bigger questions such as the government’s developmentalism, which created the materialistic Kartarejas, the thugs, and the delinquents and alienated the backward community.

Another American crisis being repressed by Vietnam films like *Rambo* is, as John Hellmann in 1991 and Frank Sweeney in 1999 identify, the crisis of identity. American society became overdependent on technology and saw it as both a guardian and saviour of American values. However, the Vietnam War showed that technology was, in the words of *Rambo* himself, “the god that failed” and an instrument of bureaucracy that betrayed American soldiers. Even with the extensive firepower that the American possessed, it could not overcome the Vietcong, who had much less. To deal with the painful loss of the war and, no less importantly, their identity, *Rambo* rekindles a more primordial American identity: the frontier heroes. Much of his lack of weaponry and survivalism underlines the film’s re-appropriation of this myth. *Blood and Crown* and other 1980s silat films had to deal with a homologous crisis. The society understood that the government’s developmentalism had created excesses and, to deal with them, they revived the dying myth of *pendekar* or traditional fighters.

When all of these Hollywood depoliticising discourses were appropriated into a depoliticising local film, what occurred was another instance of double depoliticisation. Unlike the previous case of double depoliticisation, this time the military regime and the filmmakers follow closely the depoliticising act of the modern American empire for the less obvious but similar reason: to suppress deep division within the society. The latest case further shows that double depoliticisation does not stop with just the repression of similar issues (internal division, government’s failure, and identity crisis) but goes as far as adopting the models or forms (fighting alone, men in field, and myth revival).

It is noteworthy that the screenwriters suppressed the relation between this main character and the military although in the first book of the trilogy *Ramus* had already worked as an office boy in the military headquarters. Pointing this out in the film would have potentially created a set of unnecessary dilemmas for the filmmakers. An office boy, despite

being in a military office, was not good enough to be a main male character unless it was shown later that he became a successful figure in the society. The screenwriters had neither the basis (Rasus only becomes a military officer in the second book) nor the time to do so. Moreover, it would have been rather awkward to show an office boy who could perform Rambo-like actions in a non-fantasy film. Showing that he had been trained by the military was no less problematic because, at least, it compelled the filmmaker to include the military on-screen, not to mention the challenge of portraying Rasus as good enough but not as good as the military. In any case, for filmmakers at the time, it was always wise to avoid any representation of the military unless the military-controlled State Film Corporation made the film itself.

The third stage: The most striking difference between the novel and the first film seems to rely on the final stage. In the script, the damsel in distress is successfully kidnapped and saved by the prince charming in the night of Buka Klambu so that she is free from the culturally sanctioned rape. Such a happy ending is not only given to please the audience but was also officially required by the government. The oversensitive government took a sad ending as a political challenge because, as in the case of the poisonous coconut presscakes, it undermined the happy life that the regime claimed it had created in the country. Furthermore, Srintil does not give her virginity to Rasus as she does in the novel and the second film. While filmmakers might still have filmed a rape under the pretext of educating people on what they must avoid, consensual sex, especially without negative consequences, was strictly forbidden on screen (Heider 66).

The politicised Sulam and his gank are all killed by Rasus. Their fate is similar to that of small-time thugs and criminals in the 1980s. To teach its former protégés a lesson, in 1983, exactly the year of the film's screening, the military regime started an anti-thug campaign, known locally as *Penembakan Misterius* or Mysterious Killings, by kidnapping and executing

thousands of thugs and leaving their corpses in public areas as “shock therapy” (Barker, “Introduction” 8). Just like the Mysterious Killings, Rasus’ extra-judicial killings are without any consequences. The role played by this fearful depoliticisation is “to shore up a particular political regime or a particular mode of production” (8). As with the fear of Communism and Islam, the fear of crime had the effect of weakening opposition while strengthening the military and the ruling party. The overwhelming strength of these latter groups resulted in an extremely long-lived political regime. Less directly, this coercive depoliticisation had the effect of promoting the integration of the Indonesian economy into the global economy. After all, foreign investments require order and efficiency, which the thugs seemed to threaten mainly through extortion. Elements of the Indonesian oligarchy and the military benefitted greatly from foreign investments in resource extraction, agriculture, telecommunications and industry.

The end of the delinquent Dower is very different from that of Sulam and his men. In *deus ex machina* fashion, his father, the leader of Pecikalan village, finds out his intention and arrives at a critical moment when his son is about to rape Srintil. Almost at the end of the film, Kartareja is struck by lightning, which is portrayed as a punishment from Ki Secamanggala. There are several significances behind this framing. First of all, Kejawenism is true, including its superstition. So, it reinforces the (re) location of religion to the realm of fate, which is an act of discursive depoliticisation. Second, Kartareja is the betrayer of Kejawenism rather than its defender and, by contrast, Srintil and Rasus are the defenders of the religion rather than its betrayers. Kartareja’s Kejawenism is wrong because it is political whereas Srintil and Rasus’ Kejawenism is true because it is apolitical. Third, a superstitious religion lasts while a political religion ceases to exist. Unlike Kartareja, all of the representatives of the depoliticised Kejawenism survive, including his wife and Sakarya.

In the end, just as in many films in the military era, *Blood and Crown* champions the city over the village. The hero might not come from the city but he is bringing the damsel in distress to the city. By this point in the story, their enemies in the village have been completely defeated or even killed, so there is no reason to run away to the city. Not only does it reflect the common attitude of military-era films, but it also represents the regime's discourse on city versus village. As described by Graeme Hugo, Terrence Hull, Gavin Jones in *The Demographic Dimension in Indonesian Development* (1988), the economic developmentalism of the military regime created many new cities and greatly expanded old ones. Cities were the symbol of its success and pride and at the same time the source of its headache. Internally, the regime had to deal with social problems typical of growing urban societies such as crime, social gaps, and slum areas. Externally, it also had to deal with increasing gaps between cities and villages. The gaps were not only economic but also political, cultural, and ideological. To close the gaps, however, villages were modelled on cities, not the other way around (Hugo, Hull and Hull).

Intan Paramaditha, in "City and Desire in Indonesian Cinema" (2011), observes that idealistic filmmakers in the military era often portrayed the city as "a site of social/economic disjuncture and moral contradiction produced by Suharto's developmentalist paradigm" (500). At times, the filmmakers used retuning to, and even telling life in, the countryside as a subtle criticism towards the regime's developmentalism. By contrast, the State Film Corporation and commercial producers took the city as "a visual marker of national progress and modernity" (501). Going to/after the city thus signalled an agreement or at least a non-hostile attitude toward the government. This kind of depiction was also often used in films to deal with traditional cultures which were deemed irrelevant and obstructive toward the progress of the era (Sen 1994: 121). The latter attitude is well represented in *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*, which was intended by its filmmakers and dismissed by its critiques as

a popular/commercial film. This representation is also closely related to the notion of discursive depoliticisation because it discursively suppresses the ugly faces of the military's cities.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have first surveyed the major film institutions and discourses in Indonesia during the military era. It can be concluded from the survey that all of the film institutions at the time were highly depoliticised as well as self-depoliticised. This institutional depoliticisation co-existed with the depoliticisation of certain issues in films and adaptations such as religious tensions, women's emancipation, and socio-economic gaps. The issues of post-colonialism appeared in the debates of Indonesian film institutions and discourses, and this indicates that the depoliticisation of Indonesian cinema at the time was not free from the hand of the old and new empires.

Failing to locate the first film adaptation, I have gone further by reviewing the base and superstructure of Indonesian film archiving. By doing so, I have identified the reasons why *Blood and Crown* has been marginalised and forgotten, and is now missing. This involves the poor infrastructure of Indonesian film archiving, the mediocre status of film adaptation and adaptation studies, and the unfortunate status of a commercially unsuccessful popular film adapted from a commercially successful canonical novel.

In the final section, I have offered my political analysis of the surviving script of the missing film, incorporating all of the contexts that I have previously reviewed. There are three important subject matters in the screenplay, namely, religion/tradition, crime/juvenile delinquency, and social reform, all of which embody the depoliticisation and the politicisation in the text. The script of the first adaptation does not present as much religious content as the novel but is less secular than the second adaptation. The Javanese belief,

especially the apolitical one, occupies a central place in the story. The Srintil of the first film fulfils the typical representation of women in military-era films. Her physical presence dominates the screen but her character hardly speaks or acts in the story. This reinforces the depoliticising discourses on good Indonesian women such as being passive rather than active, feminine rather than masculine, and silent rather than outspoken, which can all be traced back to colonialist/orientalist discourses. This is a case of what I call ‘double depoliticisation’ wherein a homologous issue is depoliticised by the empires, old and new, and post-colonial powers for a comparable reason.

Although the script does not expose sexuality as significantly as the critics suggest, it still implies the exoticism of the village’s sexual practices and helps divert attention from the more political content of the book. The real diversion, however, probably came from outside the scriptwriting division. The casting of Indo-Eurasian performers in the film reveals the ambivalent attitude of the outwardly anti-western regime and society towards the old and new western empires. The fact that the regime and society silently accepted rather than actively debated this ambivalence is a clear sign of depoliticisation.

With the absence of Communists, the other antagonists in the novel become marked in the first adaptation: the thugs and the delinquents. The government politicised the thugs as a threat to the state just as it had done with the Communists, and this representation is happily followed in the first adaptation. This politicisation helped provide the pretext to the depoliticised campaign of mysterious killings that coincided with the film’s release, in which paramilitary forces hunted down and murdered criminals and recidivists. Meanwhile, the delinquents in the story are concurrently politicised as the victims of westernisation and depoliticised as parents’ responsibilities, whereas in fact they were the by-products of the military regime’s own pro-economy and anti-politics policies.

Blood and Crown transforms the political drama novel into a local action film. The male protagonists' adventure in the jungle bears a resemblance to that of John Rambo in *Rambo: First Blood*, which came and gained immense popularity in Indonesia one year before the production of *Blood and Crown*. The appropriation of the depoliticising Hollywood action film by the depoliticising local action film represents another instance of double depoliticisation. Finally, the adaptation also brings forward the issue of city versus village, particularly through the action of Rasus and Srintil leaving the village for the city. This kind of resolution is a standard ending of military-era popular films and is closely related to the issue of depoliticisation, as it represses the unpleasant sides of the military's cities.

Chapter Three

The Second Adaptation: The Revolution Betrayed

Unlike *Blood and Crown*, *The Dancer*, the second adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel has generally received positive responses from the author and film critics. Critics claim that the second adaptation successfully represents the spirit and idea of the novel (see 0.2). Some even state that the film goes further than the novel, revealing the massacre that the author saw but could not express due to the oppressive situation in the military era. Yet, there are also a few dissenting opinions such as that of Heryanto, who states that *The Dancer* "does not take the next step of challenging or transcending the New Order's overall ideological framework" (*Identity* 102). In this chapter, I argue that *The Dancer* powerfully represents the spirit of repoliticisation of the early post-military era (1998-2004) while concurrently offering a distinctive type of depoliticisation typical of more recent times. I will first explore the general political, societal, and economic developments in the post-Suharto era as well as their representations in Indonesian films, all of which started with an enormous wave of repoliticisation but ended with a reverse flow of depoliticisation. Having set the general

contexts, I shall then discuss the marked repoliticisation and the less obvious yet powerful depoliticisation in the text, subjects, and specific contexts of the adaptation.

3.1 Post-Cold War, Post-Military, and Post-Islamism

In this sub-chapter, I will review the politicisation and depoliticisation in the post-military era and its cinema. As in the last two chapters, I will use the Five Fundamental Principles of the nation as the outline of this survey. Unlike in Chapter Two, however, this time I will not dwell on the issues of film institutions but focus more on the questions of film discourses and representations. The main reason for this is that there is not yet a comprehensive study of the film institutions in the post-Suharto era on which I can base my discussion, as I did with Sen's research in the last chapter. From what I have observed, many of the official film institutions from the Suharto era continue to exist although this time as semi-autonomous organisations. They are no longer given full authority or controlled by the new government but still enjoy several privileges from the latter. In addition, there have been many new unofficial and semi-official institutions in the new millenium such as, just to name a few, *Cinema Poetica*, Indonesian Motion Picture Associations, and *Badan Perfilman Indonesia* (Indonesian Film Board) (see Pasaribu, *Alternative*). Due to this governmental depoliticisation and its resulting diversity, the current film institutions, perhaps with the exception of the Institute of Film Censorship, do not distinctly steer cinematic discourses and representations as the past institutions did during the Suharto era. The factors that have influenced cinema the most since 1998 as well as uniquely revitalising the existence of the censors are the market and pressure groups outside of film institutions. Both will be covered in the following review and the last section (3.2.4).

In terms of references, there are so far only three monographs on post-military films, namely, Katinka van Heeren's *Contemporary Indonesian Film: Spirits of Reform and Ghost*

from the Past (2012), Ben Murtagh's *Genders and Sexualities in Indonesian Cinema: Constructing Gay, Lesbi, and Waria Identities on Screen* (2013), and Ariel Heryanto's *Identity and Pleasure: The Politics of Indonesian Screen Culture* (2014). The following survey owes much to those important works while at the same time it tries to enhance the existing debates by presenting additional facts and arguments and providing more information on Indonesian film adaptations.

Belief in the One and Only God: Political Islam was systematically repressed by the secular military regime in the 1970-1980s. Only in the early 1990s did the regime begin aligning itself with Islamic political activists due the erosion of its international and domestic support in the late 1980s. With the sudden collapse of the Russian empire, the American empire no longer needed the assistance of the Indonesian military regime to block the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia and began criticising the human rights abuses of its ex-ally. The domestic supporting pillars of the regime, such as the nationalist faction in the military forces, Chinese-Indonesian business owners, and liberal intellectuals, grew impatient with the growing corruption, collusion, and nepotism of the Suharto family (O'Rourke).

The fall of the military regime in 1998 did nothing but increase the power of the Islamists, for example with the appointment of Vice-President B. J. Habibie, the former head of *Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia* (Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association), as the new president until the scheduled election in 1999. The new democratic era also encouraged the (re-)establishment of many Islamic parties whose alliance successfully defeated the winner of the 1999 election, the secular Indonesian Democracy Party of Struggle, in the parliament. Salim Arskal, in *Challenging the Secular State: The Islamization of Law in Modern Indonesia* (2008), describes how *sharia* laws steadily replaced the existing secular laws on the national, provincial, and municipal levels, particularly in the first half of the 2000s. More radical Islamic activists chose an extra-governmental path by founding the

Al Qaeda-affiliated *Jamaah Islamiyah* (JI) and its cells. These groups were responsible for many terrorist acts throughout the country, including the infamous Bali Bombings in 2002 and 2005. There are also Islamic militia groups that, as Ian Wilson states in 2008, mainly consist of thugs who are actually far from pious and ideologically indifferent towards the political Islam. Martin van Bruinessen reports in “Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia” (2002) that there have been strong suspicions that the militia groups were originally founded and supported by the army to fight the left-wing organisations (Bruinessen). When the army stopped its support in the early 2010s, the groups began terrorising ‘unIslamic’ and/or ‘foreign’ businesses and extorting financial contributions for their ‘protection’ (Wilson). The militia groups now serve any political party that needs their services and will protect them politically in return.

The honeymoon of political Islam was quite short-lived. Aside from the internal divisions among the Islamic parties, the public was also disappointed with their poor performances and corruption. The introduction of sharia laws was in many places supported by politicians from secular parties from the military-era, thus “outmanoeuvring, co-opting, and marginalising the more consistently Islamist parties as well as the more progressive elements of the civil society” (Heryanto 43; see also Salim). The secular parties have consistently increased their share in the subsequent elections and taken over the parliament. Starting in 2010, a large number of provincial and municipal sharia laws have been annulled by the Department of Internal Affairs and newly proposed sharia legislation has been openly blocked by the secular parties. The Yudhoyono government (2004-14) sought and destroyed the JI cells but, curiously, allowed the Islamic militia groups to exist and even to mock the President publicly. This only strengthened the allegation that the groups were closely linked to the army and political parties.

All of this led to what Asef Bayat calls “post-Islamism”, which is “neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular” (19; see also 1.2.1). While Islamism strives for the implementation of Islam in governmental and societal affairs, post-Islamism promotes the Islamic piety of individual Muslims. In other words, post-Islamism is the new face of the governmental and, to some extent, societal depoliticisation of religion. As described by Heryanto in his 2014 monograph, post-Islamism finds its largest support in the youth population and strongest expression in popular culture, including, but not limited to, popular novels and films, including adaptations. The most financially and critically successful Islamic film in the post-military era is a film adaptation entitled *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (2008). The author of the novel was not pleased with the adaptation because it focuses on the inner conflicts of pious, young Muslims, which makes it less social and political than the book. Critics like Heryanto, however, praise the film because it is seen as more realistic, complex, and debatable than the novel. The success of the adaptation has encouraged the making of comparable films (adaptations) with similar degrees of success.

The depoliticisation of Islam co-occurs with the politicisation of the marginalised backgrounds of Islamic terrorists. Although the security forces persistently treat Islamic terrorism as a security issue, the majority of scholars and authors have tried to explain this phenomenon and thus politicise it as a problem of structural injustices. This counter discourse can be seen, for instance, in *Demi Allah Aku Jadi Teroris* (2009), *Kabut Jihad* (2012), and *Pedang Rasul* (2013). However, at the same time, this societal politicisation can be considered governmental depoliticisation in that it reveals the flaws of political Islam, which regularly blames Muslims’ hardship on the successive secular administrations. So far no major filmmaker has made a film based on this politically sensitive and financially unrewarding theme.

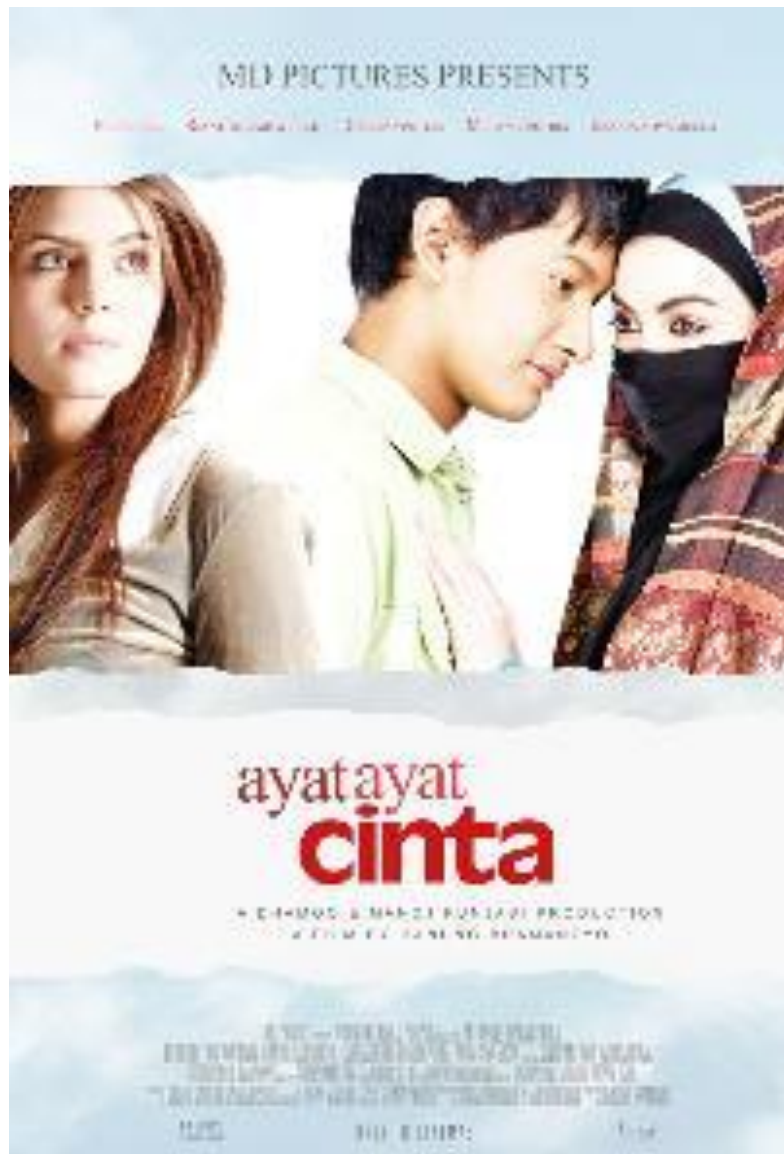


Fig. 17. *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (2008), a story of a pious Muslim protagonist who overcomes all of the obstacles in life maintaining his purity.

The post-military era has seen the production of religious-leader biopics, which the previous military regime strongly discouraged. None of the filmed leaders, however, was from Islamic political organisations. One of the most popular religious biopics is *Sang Pencerah* (2010), which narrates the life of Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of *Muhammadiyah*, the second largest Islamic organisation in Indonesia. Despite the fact that many of its cadres have been working in practical politics, Muhammadiyah is officially a social and educational organisation. The biopic production of Ahmad Dahlan was soon followed by *Sang Kiai*

(2013) of Hasyim Asyari, the founder of the largest Islamic organisation in the country, Nadhlatul Ulama. Nadhlatul Ulama is officially a non-political institution and theologically very moderate. It is also well known for its consistency in defending religious minorities and opposing Islamic extremists. There is also *Soegija* (2012), a biopic of the first native Catholic bishop, who, surprisingly for Catholics and Muslims alike, is played by a Muslim actor.



Fig. 18. *Sang Pencerah* (2010), the first biopic of religious leaders in the post-military era.

Last but not least, post-Islamism co-exists with the production of more than thirty-five films exposing non-normative sexualities and genders in one way or another (Murtagh 3).

While many of them still carry the Suharto era's portrayals of homosexuality, there are a few

that offer fairly new representations. Nia Dinata's film *Arisan! (The Gathering!)*, 2003), for instance, has been widely applauded for its positive portrayal of gay life. Yet Murtagh shows that this affirmative portrayal is not necessarily any more liberating than the portrayal of gay life in the films of the Suharto era. Drawing on Lisa Duggan's work on homonormativity, he reveals the process of desexualisation of gay and lesbian characters to make films such as *Arisan!* acceptable to the heteronormative majority. By emphasising the domestic, depoliticised private sphere, and the significant contribution that the homosexual characters make to society, those films are replacing homophobia with a stereotyped modern queer subject (107). Implicit in this representation is a hierarchy of worthiness derived from gender-conformity models. Gay couples who act according to acceptable masculine behaviours, and who imitate the model of heterosexual monogamy in their relationships, are tolerated but at the price of marginalising other types of masculinity and same-sex sexuality (119). Furthermore, homonormative gay couples are contrasted with effeminate sexual characters such as male-to-female transvestites, making the latter and other queer subjectivities unwanted.

Just and civilised humanity: The early post-military era began with a pronounced enthusiasm to investigate the human rights abuses committed by the military regime, rehabilitate the victims, and bring the perpetrators to justice. It took only a few years to realise that this would not be as simple as it seemed. First of all, the successive civilian governments have always been politically weak and have needed the military forces on their side in order to survive the relentless attacks of the non-governing parties. This has automatically increased the bargaining power of the military and its civilian supporters and discouraged the governments from investigating their precious allies. The governments have seemed convinced that the investigation would threaten the fragile peace between civilian groups, some of which also played a role in the atrocities. Second, there are many problems

at hand such as economic crises, political fights, and racial and religious conflicts (Heryanto, *Identity*). This makes the problems of the past, including the human rights abuses, seem irrelevant and less urgent. Last but not least, the public also miss the relative peace and order under the military regime and believe that the current chaotic situation has resulted from the civilian governments' fear of suppressing political actors and thus violating human rights.

Out of the numerous human right abuses committed during the military era (1966-98), there are three that have attracted the most public attention. The first and most controversial of all is the anti-communist campaign in 1965-6. The National Commission on Human Rights has officially declared that heavy, systematic, and extensive violations of human rights were committed by the state apparatus during the campaign and has submitted the result of its investigation to the Office of the Attorney General. However, it seems that the governments and the parliaments have been leaning towards non-judicial solutions, such as fact-finding and reconciliations, which are also going nowhere. After pledging in his 2014 campaign to end the controversies once and for all, the current president Joko Widodo has not taken any major steps to fulfil his promise. The second and third cases are, respectively, the kidnapping and murder of pro-democracy activists in 1990s and the persecution and rape of Chinese Indonesians in 1998. The fate of these two cases is no better, if not worse, than the first one (see ICJT and KontraS).

These three cases have been, in various ways, depicted in many literary works. They have also been portrayed in films, mostly in documentaries. *Marsinah* (2000) and *Kutunggu di Sudut Semanggi* (2004) tell about the repressions against the pro-democracy activists prior to the collapse of the military regime. The racial attacks and rapes in 1998 are depicted in feature films like *May* (2008), *Babi Buta yang Ingin Terbang* (2008), and *Di Balik 98* (2015). Just as in the wider public space, it is the anti-communist campaign that attracts the most attention from authors and filmmakers. This ranges from a subtle reference to the tragedy to a

direct representation of the massacre, from a supporting narrative to the dominant discourse to a subversive response to it. In general, men and women of letters are more radical than filmmakers in their representations of the tragedy, which is unsurprising considering the greater internal and external pressures on the latter. With new technology, anyone can write what s/he believes about the campaign and publish it online or offline. While new technology has also democratised filmmaking, perhaps due to limited budgets, indie filmmakers prefer to create documentaries than to make feature films on the tragedy.

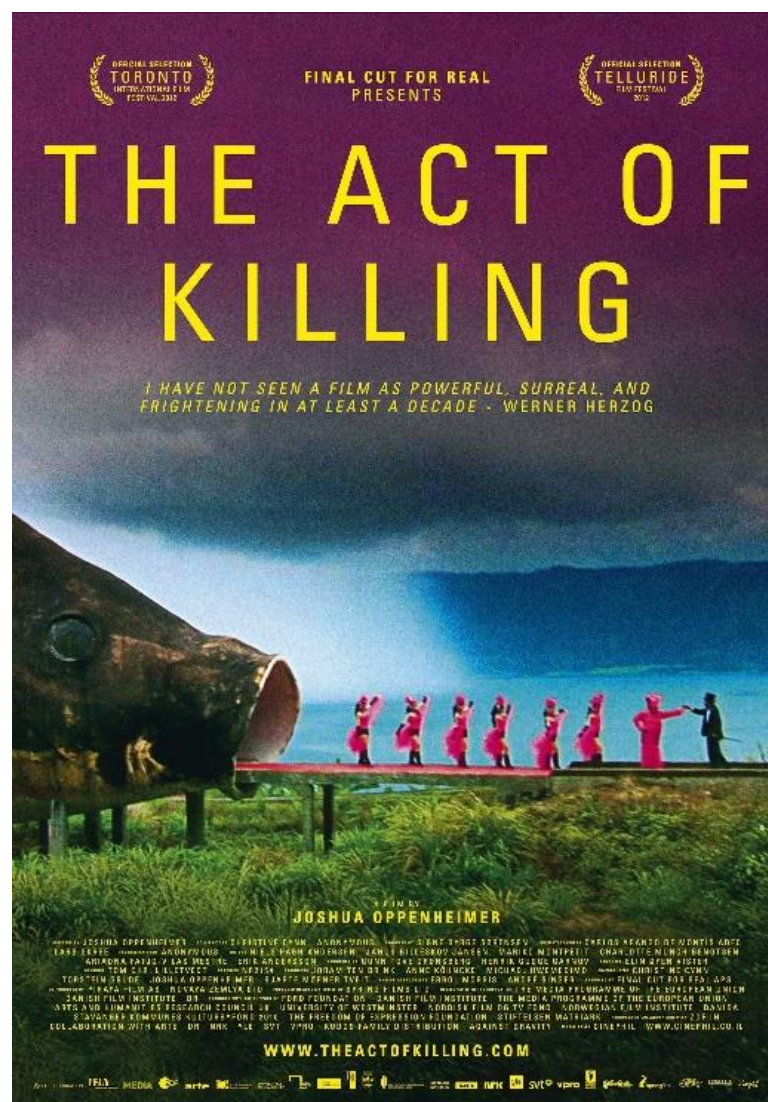


Fig. 19. *The Act of Killing* (2012), still officially banned in Indonesia.

The most famous and controversial documentary so far is *The Act of Killing* (2012), which won, among others, the 2013 European Film Award, the Asia Pacific Screen Award,

and the 67th BAFTA awards, and was nominated for the Oscar for best documentary feature at the 86th Academy Awards. Most of the other documentaries talk about the victims of the purge and/or present their point of view, which is quite progressive compared to the total silence in the military era. Yet, in *The Act of Killing*, the unrepentant former members of the Indonesian anti-communist militia boast about the murders and even happily re-enact some of them in the style of American cowboy movies. Nevertheless, none of the documentaries has had a major impact outside of academia and activist circles in Indonesia, not to mention that the screenings have regularly been stopped by the militia and the police.

Major film producers still avoid the issues perhaps because of the perceived economic losses and the threats from anti-communist groups. It goes without saying that each member of a film-making team may have a different view on the tragedy. Usually, the tragedy becomes a mere background for other narratives such as love stories and biopics of national figures. This makes *The Dancer*, the focus of the current chapter, occupy a unique position with regard to the massacre. On the one hand, the film conventionally puts the love story between Srintil and Rasus first and foremost and sets the anti-communist campaign as the background to the romance. It also follows the ruling narrative in several aspects, as will be made clear in the analysis later on. On the other hand, the film has certainly achieved more than that. Unlike the other films, the tragedy is ‘the’ background of the story, not just one of many events in the narrative. Srintil and Rasus also represent the two main historical actors, namely the accused Communists and the military, and are not merely passive observers in the tragedy. Furthermore, the film is the first commercial feature film to depict the involvement of the military in the anti-communist purge, which has been regularly denied by the military forces (Heryanto, *Identity*).

The unity of Indonesia: The early years of the post-military era were also characterised by sectarian conflicts all over the country. The repressed racial and/or religious

prejudices during the military era began to surface and many lives were lost. The most notable racial conflicts were the xenophobic attack on Chinese Indonesians a few days before the succession of General Suharto and the bloody conflict between the Madurese and the Dayak in Borneo provinces from 2001-3. Some local fighters and national politicians tried to reframe the racial conflicts as religious wars (Bruinessen). This was done, for example, by highlighting the fact that the majority of Chinese Indonesians are non-Muslim while the majority of non-Chinese are Muslim. There was also a religious conflict within one ethnic group that gradually involved fighters from other ethnicities such as in the Moluccas (1998-2000). It is hard to consider all of the conflicts purely horizontal (between people) considering the overwhelming reports of the involvement of the state apparatus in them. Meanwhile, the rebellion of East Timor could not help having religious and racial dimensions. As with many disgruntled non-Muslim and non-Javanese communities, the East Timorese independent fighters perceived the occupation by Indonesia as a racial and religious genocide by the Muslim Javanese against the Catholic Timorese.

In addition to the racial and religious conflicts, the territorial integrity of the nation was strongly compromised at the beginning of the new era. The collapse of the military regime and the weakening of the country encouraged the repressed separatist movements to resurface and fight for their independence. The United Nations forced the Habibie government to agree on the referendum in East Timor in 1999, which resulted in the independence of Timor Leste and the atrocities committed by the withdrawing of Indonesian military forces and militia. The two small islands of Sipadan and Ligitan were lost to Malaysia in an international court in Den Haag in 2002. The Free Aceh Movement also intensified its international lobbying and guerrilla resistance, which were cut short by the devastating tsunami in 2005. The Acehnese rebels and the Yudhoyono government achieved a permanent solution in regard to greater autonomy for the province, which included the

implementation of sharia laws and the recognition of local parties. There has been a smaller-scale armed resistance in West Papua that is receiving growing international attention.

All of those territorial losses and challenges have only increased the public stature of the military forces and its ultra-nationalistic militia while decreasing the perceived capability of the civilian governments. People have become highly sensitive to the issues of nationalism, particularly against Malaysia and China, and this has been politically exploited by both the governments and the political parties. However, there are also civil society members that advocate a greater decentralisation and welfare approach to pacify the separatist tendencies (see Erb, Sulistiyanto, and Faucher). So far the decentralisation has not given the expected result but created ‘local strong men’ who are no less corrupt and cruel than the central government in Jakarta. There has been progress with the existence of ethnic minorities, particularly Chinese Indonesians (see Dieleman, Koning, and Post). Confucianism has become one of the officially acknowledged religions in the country. Chinese Indonesians are now free to learn Mandarin and practise their traditions. There are a growing number of Chinese Indonesians who are actively participating in politics and winning public favour, such as the current governor of the capital, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. This progress has been openly and secretly opposed by ‘native’ politicians and businessmen.

Films with nationalist characteristics have flourished in response to the threat of national disintegration. Imitating the military-era patriotist films, new films with such characteristics still champion military officers as the most nationalistic defenders of the nation. This can be seen, for example, in *Merah Putih* (2009), *Darah Garuda* (2010), and *Hati Merdeka* (2011). There are also popular motion pictures on Chinese Indonesians actively supporting nationalist ideas such as *Ca Bau Kan* (2001), *Gie* (2005), and *King* (2009), the first two of which are adaptations of a novel and a diary. None of the Chinese Indonesian characters in those films is a military officer, thus portraying the ever limited

access of Chinese Indonesians to military positions. For a brief period of time in the early 2000s, there was also a trend for Chinese-looking actors and actresses and Chinese problems in TV serials.

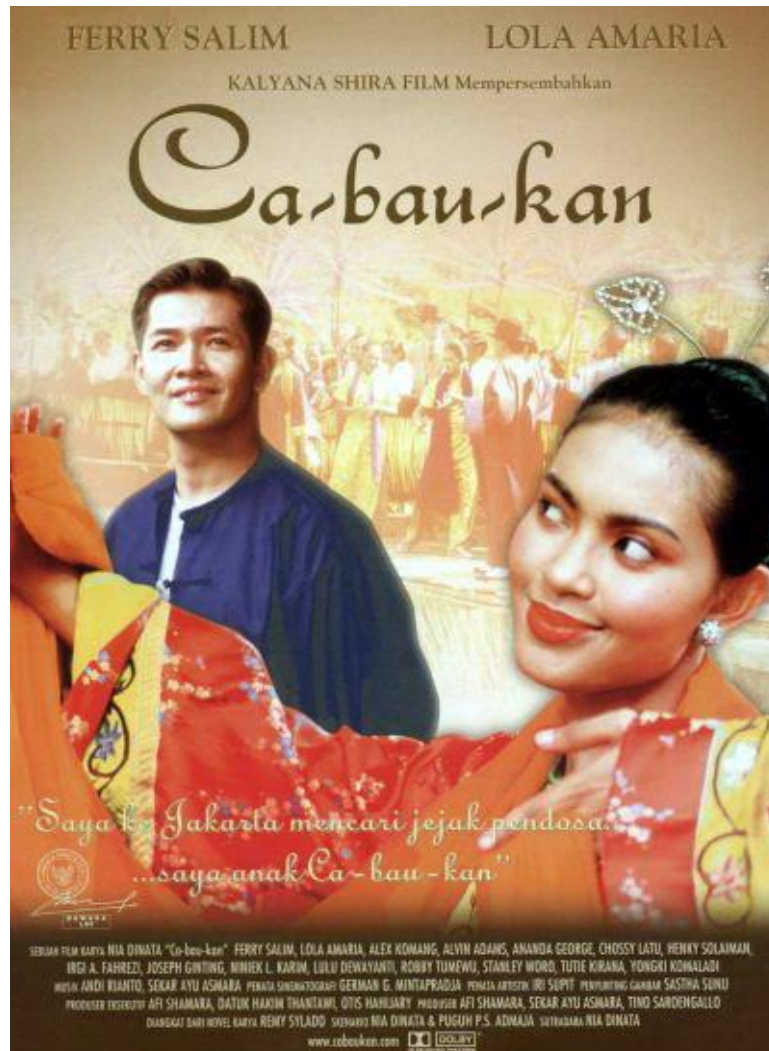


Fig. 20. *Ca Bau Kan* (2001), a post-military film on Chinese Indonesians, telling the life of a pragmatic Chinese businessman who assists the Indonesian freedom fighters and falls in love with a native woman.

There is a new, popular genre called ‘frontier film’, which comprises films about the hardship of Indonesians living on the frontiers, far from the more prosperous Java Island and/or close to the neighbouring countries. Most of the frontier films deal with West Papuans such as *Aku Ingin Menciummu Sekali Saja* (2002), *Denias* (2006), and *Di Timur Matahari*

(2012). This is not surprising considering the Papuans' continued conflicts with the state as well as the 'exoticism' of the people and the island to non-Papuan. *Tanah Surga ... Katanya* (2012) tells about the tragic life of those who live on the border with the more prosperous Malaysia. *Atambua 39 Celcius* (2012) deals with the pro-Indonesia Timorese militia who run away from the newly independent Timor Leste and live on the Indonesian side of the border. Aside from addressing nationalist issues, the frontier films also reveal many social injustices in the country and will be explored in the discussion of the fifth principle.

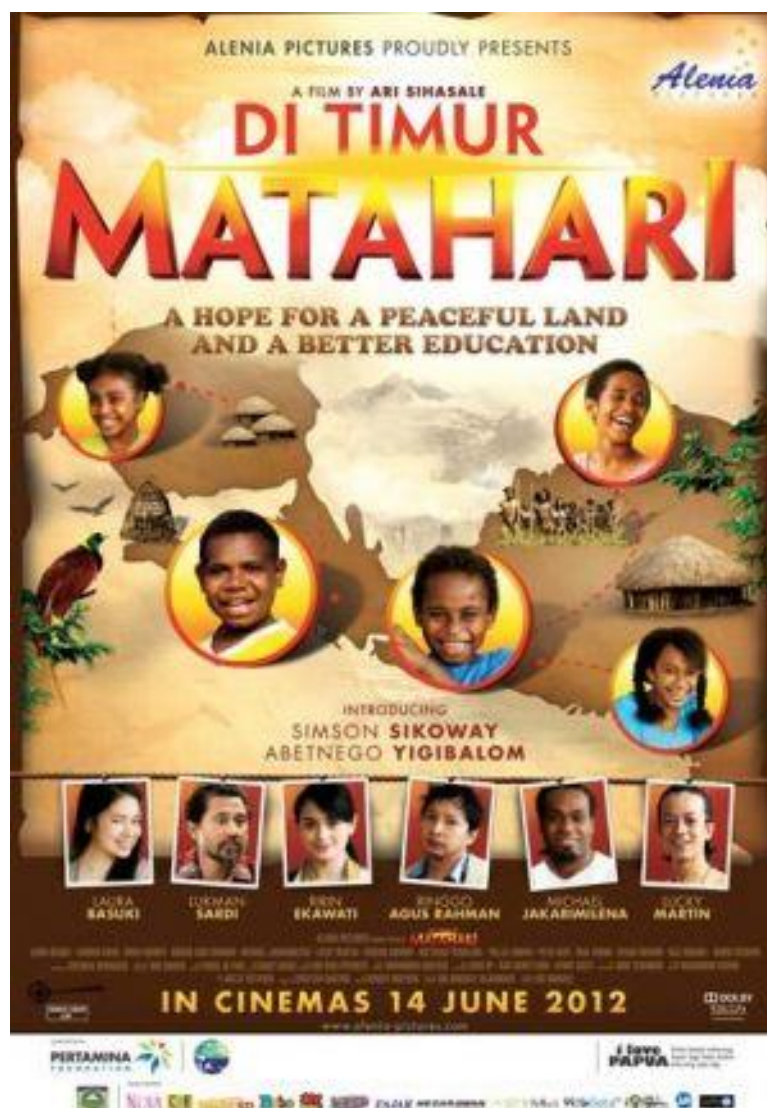


Fig. 21. *Di Timur Matahari* (2012), one of several films on West Papua, narrating the life of children in the highly volatile region.

Democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations among representatives: Although not without its defects, democracy has been one of the marked achievements of post-military Indonesia. It is often believed that democracy can never last outside of the western hemisphere, let alone in Islamic societies. Indonesia, however, has peacefully conducted four legislative and three presidential elections, which have all been considered free and fair by domestic and foreign observers (Nakamura 11). The winning party has consistently changed in every election. The parliament has become strong, sometimes to the annoyance of the government and the public. In 2004, the parliament adopted a bicameral system with the establishment of the Senate House. There have been judicial reforms as well although these have not been as marked as the executive and legislative ones. Similar to other democratic countries, the progress of the *trias politica* has been accompanied by the multiplication and freedom of the press. The number of print, broadcast, and later digital media grew exponentially in 1998-2000 (Garcia).

Everything must come to an end, and the great politicisation in post-military Indonesia has indeed come to an end. People have become disillusioned with the conflicts, politics, and corruption. Depoliticisation has returned, but this time not in the traditional, repressive mode, as practised by the military regime, but in a more sophisticated form, as in advanced democratic countries (Flinders and Wood 135). This new development has been signified by the establishment and empowerment of many new ad hoc, professional institutions in different sectors. These range from business (Business Competition Monitoring Commission), finance (Indonesian Financial Services Authority), and law (Judicial Commission) to the press (Board of Press), media (Indonesian Broadcasting Commission), and film (Indonesian Film Board). Besides the creation of these new institutions, the governments and parliaments have also decreased their control over the existing institutions as in the case of the Institute of Film Censorship.

The absence of direct control by the governments has brought censorship into the hands of whoever dominates the public arena. It is safe to say that for the past ten years the public discourses have been greatly steered by the post-Islamists. It is no coincidence therefore that the current censorship is quite progressive in terms of politics but remains conservative *vis a vis* sexuality. Government Regulation No. 18 Year 2014, the new censorship law, no longer sets down political ideologies that are not to be expressed in films. There is no longer a blanket ban on the exposition of Indonesia's internal or foreign politics or the policies of the regime, as in the former regulation. Hence, any political criticisms towards governments are no longer seen as a threat to the security of the state and nation. Post-military films are free to openly criticise and even make fun of the government and their policies. Films can now have corrupt police officers although they usually balance this with the existence of honest officers. Officers can be defeated and killed, too, although the law enforcement eventually wins against the criminals in the end. Those new developments can be seen, for instance, in the critically acclaimed martial arts film *The Raid 2* (2014).



Fig. 22. Reza, a corrupt police officer, the moment before he is shot to death by a mob boss in *The Raid 2* (2014).

Mass action, either urban or rural, remains underrepresented in post-military films but this time this is due not as much to the governments' intervention as to public disillusionment with politics. Mass action can now be portrayed as positive, especially if it is carried out by student demonstrators, as in films on the regime change in 1998. As suggested by Edward Aspinall in *Opposing Soeharto: Compromise, Resistance, and Regime Change in Indonesia* (2005), political scholars regularly depoliticise student movements as moral activism as opposed to political action. This notion has been well received and reiterated by filmmakers. Films on the May 1998 chaos in Jakarta, for instance, consistently differentiate the 'pure' student activists from the 'impure' rioters. Furthermore, resolutions to social conflicts still come overwhelmingly from urban, educated, and/or middle-class professionals or religious leaders as represented in many frontier films. This is actually at odds with the facts that most social documentaries reveal. In addition, politicians remain underrepresented or negatively portrayed in the new films but for a different reason than in the military era.



Fig. 23. An idealised image of student demonstrators in *Di Balik 98* (2015).

Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia: Officially, the Soeharto regime rejected both Capitalism and Socialism as the economic platform of the country and claimed to implement a ‘Pancasila Economy’. Essentially, this was capitalism but with the protection of selected strategic resources such as energy, food, and information. As portrayed by John Bresnan in “The United States, the IMF, and the Indonesian Financial Crisis” (1999), this protection eventually eclipsed free competition and extended to the other lucrative sectors controlled by the president’s family and cronies. That was why the obstructed foreign capital punished the regime’s economy in 1997-8 and foreign capitalist countries generally welcomed the collapse of their ex-ally. The early post-military era was characterised by much privatisation in every economic sector, including the previously well-protected strategic resources. This was partly dictated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through the infamous Letter of Intent but at the same time was the new government’s only strategy to attract private investments and stop the further collapse of the economy.

The depoliticised economy has been performing relatively well and to some extent has brought Indonesia to a better position than in the military era. Indonesia emerged from the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-8 relatively unscathed and now has become a member of the prestigious G20 countries. The depoliticisation has not gone completely unchecked. As early as 2005, politicians and civil societies voiced their concerns over what they called ‘neo-liberalism’ and it remains a popular catchphrase in the media. Yet, in general, the economy has been continuously deregulated and depoliticised. The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, which in the past criticised the ruling Democratic Party for becoming the local agent of neo-liberalism, launched heavier economic deregulation after winning the last election in 2014 to combat the declining value of the currency and the threat of capital flight.

There has been a change in the general representation of social justice in the literature and films. A great number of literary works have revealed the unjust social structures and

systematic exploitation of the poor in the past and the present. The frontier films practically do the same job as those literary works. On the other hand, there are a few books and films that still portray prosperity as being due to talent and hard work and, by implication, poverty as due to unluckiness and laziness. Biopic films about successful businessmen and politicians generally follow this representation, such as *Jokowi* (2013) and *Sepatu Dahlan* (2014). There are also motion pictures that stand in the middle of the two extremes; they scrutinise the social injustices but at the same time suggest that a combination of luck and hard work can conquer all. This middle approach is embodied by *Laskar Pelangi* (2008), a film adaptation of the best-selling novel with the same title, one of the highest grossing films in Indonesian box office history, and the recipient of local and international awards.



Fig. 24. *Laskar Pelangi* (2008), setting a new outlook on poverty as well as social mobility in Indonesian cinema.

In general, however, popular literature and films tend to focus on the haves and their problems. There is still a die-hard belief among producers and publishers that common people do not want to read about and watch their own hardship. As in the early military-era films, the early post-military films are preoccupied with the luxurious lifestyles and sexual adventures of the super-rich Indonesians in the capital. This can be seen in films, to name a few, like *Arisan!* (2003), *Virgin* (2004), and *Jakarta Undercover* (2007). The lifestyles and adventures are by and large portrayed as negative, decadent, and immoral. There are also films that explore high class cosmopolitanism such as *Eiffel ... I'm in Love* (2003), *99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa* (2013), and *9 Summers 10 Autumns* (2015), all of which are film adaptations of popular novels. Unlike opulent lifestyles and controversial sexualities, cosmopolitanism is generally pictured as positive and progressive in these films.

Interestingly, cosmopolitanism is no longer associated with lives and settings in Europe and Northern America, as in the military-era films, but now extends to fellow Asian countries like Egypt, as in *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (2008), and South Korea, as in *Hello Goodbye* (2012). Egypt might not signify the idea of prosperity per se but it does represent Islamic intellectualism due to the existence of its Al-Azhar University and its world-famous Islamic intellectuals. Many prominent Indonesian Islamic scholars and politicians are graduates of the Egyptian university and they are the new elite group in the post-Islamic country. On the other hand, South Korea symbolises wealth, technology and lifestyle, in short, the new awakening of Asian countries. Heryanto's 2014 book reveals that the Indonesian fans of South Korean popular culture transcend the presupposed racial and religious boundaries. Islamic girls adore Korean love stories as much as they are crazy about Islamic love films.



Fig. 25. *Hello Goodbye* (2012), one of the many Indonesian films set in foreign countries.

3.2 *The Dancer* the Film: Hyper-politicisation and Depoliticisation

In the last sub-chapter, I have reviewed the repoliticisation and depoliticisation in post-Cold War, post-Suharto, and post-Islamic Indonesia and its cinematic representations. The following sub-chapter will present an analysis of *The Dancer*, the second film adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's novel with the same title. The main aim of this sub-chapter is to explore how the repoliticisation and depoliticisation in Indonesia and its films, as previously discussed, interact with the adaptation. There are two important subject matters in the film, namely, 'secularism' and 'conciliatory politics', both of which traverse the structure and semiotics of

the film as well as embodying the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in the text. Then, I will reveal the internal (the filmmaker, cast, and crew) and external (the government, society, and market) factors that may have influenced the political discourses in the adaptation.

3.2.1 The Structure

The structure here mainly refers to the series of events, sequentially and/or consequentially connected by the actions of the characters in the film. While Tohari divides his trilogy based on Srintil's power relations with the three groups of power (the villagers, the Communists, and the civilian/military professionals), the second adaptation completely excludes the civilian professionals from the narrative. The post-1965 era is narrated very briefly in the film and it focuses exclusively on the ex-Communists and the military. One of the reasons for this is perhaps because the exploits of the civilian professional class have been exhaustively exposed and criticised elsewhere. In contrast, despite the major changes in the post-military era, the military and ex-Communists remain politically and academically enigmatic.

The narrative of the film can be divided roughly into 1) the making of the ronggeng, 2) the politicisation of Paruk, and 3) the anti-communist campaign. The structure loosely follows the model formulated by the narrative theorist Tzvetan Todorov and adapted by Warren Buckland in 2003. The first stage is the state of equilibrium, the second stage the disruption of the equilibrium, and the third the creation of a new order. Although mostly chronological, the film begins with the detention of the Paruk villagers in the suffocating, dark, tight compartments of a sugar factory, which actually belongs to the third stage of the narrative. This choice of opening makes clear from the very beginning the importance of the anti-communist campaign and, to some extent, the political tone of the film. From this opening scene, the film jumps to a flashback of the early situation in Paruk village before Srintil becomes a dancer and moves in a linear fashion to the end.

The narration of the film is predominantly omniscient with few narrations from the point of view of Rasus. The use of Rasus' point of view in the first stage helps the spectators to empathise with him, and, with him, witness how his girlfriend gains cultural, social, and economic capital while he himself remains a nobody and can only see her from a distance. Being disappointed, Rasus runs away from the village, works as an office boy in the military depot in Dawuan, and trains as a military officer. Later, this helps the positive representation of the military in the film, which, very much like Rasus, starts as an underdog in contrast to the strong Indonesian Communist Party (the PKI) but ends up a winner. In other words, the restricted narrations set the narrative of the film as a classic story of losers to winners and, in the case of Srintil and the PKI, winners to losers.

The first stage: The first stage introduces an important narrative device: the obstacles, that is, those standing in the way of the main characters reaching their goal. In regard to these matters, there is not much difference between the film and the novel. Srintil's main goal is to restore the reputation of her parents and her village by becoming the next ronggeng dancer. Her obstacles are the blessing of Kartareja as the guardian of the ronggeng tradition, her relationship with Rasus, and her own individuality. On the other hand, Rasus' objective is simply to marry his sweetheart. His obstacle is equally clear, that is, it is impossible to marry her if Srintil becomes a ronggeng.

The first narrative difference between the novel and the film begins with Srintil's relation with her mentor Kartareja and her grandfather Sakarya. There are power relations between the villagers in the film, but they are of a different kind than those of the novel. For one thing, the Srintil of the film is less politically conscious than the same character in the novel. While the Srintil of the novel grows to realise her exploited fate and eventually refuses to dance as a protest against the elders of the village, the Srintil of the film never achieves the same level of consciousness and quits dancing simply because she is broken-hearted. She is

merely a passive main character throughout the film, like a precious trophy being fought for by others. This is perhaps the first depoliticisation in the film, that is, the disempowerment of the relatively politicised female protagonist of the novel. The director admits this transformation while arguing: “the representation of Srintil in *The Dancer* is based on a fact that we found during the research, that women in 1965 were an object” (Isfansyah, “Aku” par. 19, my trans.).

The first stage of the film also reduces the social and cultural standing of Sakarya, who is now portrayed as powerless and apolitical, in contrast to the powerful and political Kartarejas. More significantly, and still related to Sakarya’s reduced role, the film barely expresses anything about Kejawenism, Sufism, and their intersections in Cultural Islam, although the novel does so extensively. While Paruk in the novel partly embodies apolitical but moral Islam, the village in the film fully represents the Kejawen community, but one with a rather understated spiritualism. There are indeed the Javanese rituals of finding the kris, the bathing ritual, and the Buka Klambu ceremony but their collective significance relies on their cultural politics rather than philosophical spiritualism. This tendency can be sensed from the very beginning when, unlike in the novel, Kartareja expresses his doubt about Srintil’s qualities as ‘the chosen one’.

Kartareja : So this Srintil has been a ronggeng since birth, you say?

Sakarya : What I mean is that she has received the indang (the spirit of a dancer).

Kartareja : Sakarya, Sakarya. So you’re telling me you know when a person has the proper spirit.

Sakarya : Don’t get me wrong. When it comes to all the requirements, you are the only one who knows. (Isfansyah, *Dancer*)

It is revealed soon that Kartareja does so partly to increase his bargaining position against Srintil, Sakarya, and the other villagers. Likewise, while the novel describes in detail Kartareja's spiritual possession in the bathing ceremony, the film shows that he is completely conscious throughout the event. The Buka Klambu itself becomes merely an event for the Kartarejas to officially declare their ownership of Srintil and sell her virginity to the highest bidder. This elaborate de-spiritualisation is the first step of the discursive repoliticisation in the adaptation because it frees the issues surrounding the villagers from the realm of fate and promotes them to the area of deliberation and debate.

Due to its detachment from Islam, the film bears a different kind of Foucauldian true and false discourse from the novel. Unlike the novel, the film does not discredit Paruk's sexuality and way of life. What is wrong is the manipulation of the tradition such as in the commercialisation of the Buka Klambu. While the novel grounds its moral judgement on the belief of the Islamic majority, the film overlooks Islam and Kejawenism altogether and focuses instead on a more secular value of integrity. Thus, the ronggeng commercialisation is immoral not because it is against Islam or the ronggeng tradition itself but because it is against Kartareja's duty to protect it. Furthermore, unlike the novel, the film does not draw any causal relations between the religious practices and the tragedy that befalls the village. Although the fall of the community might incite the spectators' sympathy, it is of a different kind from that in the novel because now the tragedy is less divinely sanctioned and more politically driven.

Similar to the novel, the film also extends the politicisation of the community to the ever-sensitive area of sexuality. Aside from the lovemaking between Srintil and Rasus, the film's sexual content centres on the bidding for Srintil's virginity in the Buka Klambu and the story of 'happily cheated wives'. These two events indicate a wide moral division among the villagers; there are those who exploit Paruk's unique sexuality and those who sincerely

believe in it. On the one hand, there are Kartareja and Sakarya who are pictured as enjoying their new wealth after ‘selling’ Srintil in the controversial ceremony. On the other hand, there are wives who compete for their husbands to sleep with the famous ronggeng because they sincerely believe that sleeping with a ronggeng will help to restore their husbands’ virility and fertility. Meanwhile, the novel’s more controversial stories of Rasus’ prostitute mother, open marriage, and gowok tradition are completely excluded in the film.

The film shows a very different attitude to Paruk’s sexuality from that of the novel. Unlike the novel, the film does not exercise what Heryanto calls the post-modern narrative technique of under erasure, that is, “to manufacture and nurture a stigma so it could be rejected” (*Identity* 142; see 1.2.1). While the novel frames the free sexuality of Paruk village as madness as opposed to the normal, respectable sexuality of Dawuan city, the film does not present anything about Dawuan’s sexuality and, therefore, there is neither a contrast nor counter-sexuality. The lovemaking between Srintil and Rasus itself breaks a number of sex-related taboos in Indonesian cinema. It is rare to see extra-marital sexual intercourse between two consenting, loving adults on screen, let alone between a highly respected military officer and a heavily condemned communist prostitute.

Furthermore, unlike the novel, the film does not impose Paruk’s politics exclusively upon Srintil’s sexuality. While the novel suppresses any notion of class and class conflict, the first stage of the film introduces the existence of both in the village. There are landowners and their enforcers who exploit the labour of the working-class villagers, who initially include the pre-military Rasus. Thus, if the novel tends to reduce economic capital to a mere by-product of the cultural and social relations (as in the wealth of Kartareja due to his position), the film tries to reinvigorate what Bourdieu calls “the brutal fact of universal reducibility to economics” (*Forms* 253). Above all, this shows that the villagers are already divided even before the external politicisation by the PKI in the second stage.

Overall, the first stage of the film narrative appears to promote the idea of secularism, which, according to Jonathan Fox in *Political Secularism, Religion, and the State* (2015), is “the idea that one can understand the world without reference to religion” (23). While few supporters of secularisation theory would today argue that religion will disappear, Fox contends that secularism as an ideology continues to challenge religion in government and society (17). This challenge is no less existent in the discursive realm as the analysis above has just indicated. Politically, *The Dancer*’s secularism constitutes concurrently an act of discursive repoliticisation and one of depoliticisation. On the one hand, the film reasserts the forgotten, non-religious dynamics of a religious minority, while on the other, it suppresses both the Cultural Islamism of the original text and the post-Islamism of the post-military era in its narrative. This is in line with Noah Feldman’s (2005) proposition that secularism does not necessarily mean anti-religion but also includes attempts to protect religious minorities from interferences by governments and/or religious majorities.

The second stage: The first turning point in the narrative takes place when Bakar, the communist leader, visits the village and engages the ronggeng troupe. The second stage of the narrative is the liminal period, which means that it occurs outside of established (or normal) social events (Buckland). Although the first stage exposes several events that the rest of the country easily considers peculiar (particularly, the sexual practices in Paruk), those are part of normal life in the village. The liminality of the second stage relies more on the overt collaboration between the ronggeng troupe and the political party, which is considered abnormal by both the villagers and wider Indonesian society. While the arts in Indonesia have never been completely free from politics, their relations are persistently concealed, unacknowledged, and/or made subtle. It was the PKI that for the first time in the history of modern Indonesia dispelled these secret relations and openly used literature and the arts for its political goals (Foulcher; Moeljanto and Ismail).

Ever culturally and socially strong, the Bakar of the film is pictured as highly political, perhaps even more so than the Bakar in the novel, yet always true to his political ideals. When he ‘uses’ the ronggeng troupe for the cause of Communism, he does so in good faith so that the victory of Communism will save the villagers from their wretched existence. Being faithful to his communist ideals, Bakar rejects the exploitation of female sexuality for political ends. He is far more interested in the welfare of the villagers and the conservation of the ronggeng dance as a performing art of the people. As he expresses in his first meeting with the villagers:

Landowner : I bet you keep coming here because of the deflowering ceremony. Right?

Bakar : If it were only about sex, for me that would be a minor issue. What’s important is to maintain ronggeng dancing as a traditional art form. So that its dignity and prestige are not co-opted by the bourgeois. (Isfansyah, *Dancer*)

Bakar’s personal relationship with Srintil is not seen in the film, nor is her indebtedness to him. There is not a single scene in which he talks directly with her despite his frequent visits to the village. This physical proximity signifies a discursive dissociation between Bakar and the sexual exploitation of the dancer. The film also tempers the anti-religion stigma of the Communists that the military and the novel jointly propagate. While the Bakar of the novel prohibits Sakarya and Kartareja from setting out offerings, the Bakar of the film comes and discusses this sensitive matter with the villagers. It is revealed that he does not forbid the superstitious ritual; he just needs more time for political speeches at the rallies. Here, for the first time, being political or politicisation does not necessarily carry a negative connotation, which is radically different from the central belief of the novel and the military regime.

The vandalism of Ki Secamanggala's tomb, allegedly by the enemy of the PKI, draws Srintil and the other villagers closer to the political party. Bakar is present at the scene of the vandalism and starts agitating the angry villagers. The ensuing riot, however, is not directly provoked by the PKI leader but by Darsun, a non-influential male villager in the novel. Darsun unexpectedly hijacks Bakar's speech and provokes the villagers to destroy a nearby forest. Despite the many conflicts in the narrative, the film does not really have a clear political villain except in Darsun. Later this character also betrays the PKI and his fellow villagers to the military and rural militia when the political tide turns. More than the moral and political contradictions between the villagers in the first stage, the character of Darsun directly challenges the traditional, depoliticised image of the villagers, as established by the military regime and sustained by the novel.

The positive representation of Bakar (and the negative portrayal of Darsun) can also be seen from the repression of several scenes from the screenplay. For example, it is written in one of the montages in the script: "*Orang-orang sedang dihasut oleh Bakar. Darsun ada disana. Bakar memberikan beberapa acecoris berwarna merah*" (62). This roughly translates: 'The people are being provoked by Bakar. Darsun is in the scene. Bakar distribute some red accessories'. While 'being provoked' might still have a neutral or positive meaning in English, 'dihasut' has a more consistently negative referent in Indonesian. This montage does not cut into the film, hence signalling the filmmaker's changing characterisation of Bakar from a negative to a positive or, at least, an ambivalent character.

Replicating the novel's attitude, the film also shows sympathy to the villagers as innocently accused communists. On several accounts, the film echoes the effect of the dominant discourse of the novel and the military on the communised villagers. The villagers in the film have not been completely freed from the depoliticising construct that those living in the rural areas are unsophisticated and innocent. Some of them are pictured as illiterate and

thus ignorant of the meaning of the PKI's slogans and speeches. They are also unaware when their names are written on paper for, in Bakar's words, "refreshment after dancing" whereas they are actually registered as members of the party (Isfansyah, *Dancer*). These are probably the reasons why Heryanto concludes that:

Sang Penari does not take the next step of challenging or transcending the New Order's overall ideological construct, which has already been built by the master narrative of *Pengkhianatan G 30 September*. With a few exceptions (mainly authored by survivors of the anti-communist campaign from 1965), left-leaning characters in all Indonesian fiction set against the background of the 1965-66 massacre appear either as wicked villains, smart but malicious persons who mislead other people, innocent but hopelessly foolish individuals who are susceptible to communist propaganda, or unlucky for being related to Communists by descent or marriage. Invariably, these fictions convey a familiar message to their implied audience: it is the characters' own fault if they are killed off. *Sang Penari* makes no exception to this general practice. (*Identity* 150-1)

Nevertheless, the Bakar of the film does not easily sit into any of Heryanto's stipulated categories. He is a peculiar combination of smart and influential as well as innocent and unlucky. If he is guilty, he is guilty of idealism but certainly not of selfish manipulation as the novel suggests. Evidently, Bakar is also easily deceived by his 'victims', as in his encounter with Darsun. Thus, the film's attitude to ideological communists like Bakar is actually more complex than what Heryanto describes.

Similar to its nemesis, the military in the film displays a number of ambivalent qualities. Rasus is pictured as a diligent and smart pupil of the military in Dawuan city, but not to the point where he begins to reflect or talk philosophically, as in the novel. Nor does he

speak with low-frequency words and/or English loanwords. Rasus keeps his strong Banyumasan accent even after he becomes a military officer, thus maintaining his identity as a villager despite his close contact with the ‘enlightening’ military from the city. He is not shown as being enlightened by the sexual morality of the city either, as he still has sexual intercourse with Srintil after his military appointment. The fact that Rasus asks Srintil to quit being a ronggeng, marry him, and live in the city indicates that he does not have any problem with the moral stigma of a ronggeng dancer. To this extent, the representation of the military Rasus is different from the novel and rather subversive to the culturally and morally perfect image of military officers.

In general, the other military officers in the film are portrayed as ambivalent, like Rasus. Sergeant Slamet, in the novel a Javanese, is replaced in the film by Sergeant Binsar, a Batakese. The sergeant is pictured as a benevolent dictator, coercive but caring, which has been the dominant discourse on the military regime. There are times when he physically hits Rasus but there are moments in which he takes care of his subordinate and even yields to his stubbornness. Yet, at the same time the film challenges the prevalent discourse of apolitical military officers in the characterisation of the sergeant. Even before the killing of the six generals in Jakarta, Binsar has actively spied on the Communists. He, for instance, instructs Rasus: “to monitor the movements of the Communists around here . . . to watch the Dawuan Market area” (Isfansyah, *Dancer*). This shows that the subsequent anti-communist campaign is not a knee-jerk retaliation from the military but a culmination of a long power struggle.

The characterisations of Rasus and his military colleagues in the film repudiate the novel’s Foucauldian opposition between true (as represented by the military) and false (as epitomised by the PKI). Speaking with largely marginalised/ridiculed language, Rasus thus discursively relinquishes the military’s claim to objective truth, which, as Edward Said observes, often grounds itself on the “language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian

value, and knowledge” (*World* 216). Furthermore, this rejection also represents a challenge to what Wood and Flinders call ‘scientism’, that is, “the use of scientific discourse, expertise, and scientifically determined solutions to depoliticise an issue” (163). As with the de-spiritualisation in the first stage, this de-scientisation constitutes a discursive repoliticisation because it brings the infallibility of the military back into question and treats it as a biased, political issue. The fact that Rasus is morally imperfect and that Binsar pre-emptively spies on the PKI only underlines this politicisation of the military. All in all, the second stage effectively puts the military on an equal footing to the Communists and the villagers.

The third stage: The politicisation of the military is further reinforced in its portrayed involvement in the anti-communist purge. The third turning point, at which the communisation of Paruk ends and the anti-communist campaign begins, is the assassination of six military generals in Jakarta by a group of allegedly communist-inspired young military officers. The assassination itself is not portrayed in the film but news of it reaches the village of Paruk from a radio Bakar gave in one of his early visits. The radio thus becomes an ironic symbol; it is given by Bakar to mark the beginning of his communist campaign but in the end is used by the military to signal the start of the anti-communist campaign.

Sergeant Binsar quickly responds to the development in Jakarta by producing a list of names and instructing his subordinates “to secure” the people on the list (Isfansyah, *Dancer*). Here a political conflict is discursively depoliticised into a mere security issue, hence blurring the individual, social, and governmental dimensions of the problem (Balzacq; Salter). Yet, to post-military Indonesian audiences, the phrase ‘to secure’ has too familiar a connotative meaning of ‘to kill’ or, at least, ‘to imprison’, reminding them of the frequent, extrajudicial, political measures by the military in its era. What comes later to the accused and ideological communists is of course far from being secured. Working with the rural militia, the military destroys Paruk and takes away the accused communists, including Srintil, Sakarya, and the

Kartarejas. Srintil is later taken out of detention only to be raped by Darsun, who now turns from a communist sympathiser into a militia man. In a separate operation, Rasus and his colleagues execute Bakar and other communist hard liners. Thus, far from being depoliticising, the narrative actually repoliticises the military's campaign on the governmental, societal, and individual levels altogether. The purge is not isolated from the governmental coup in Jakarta, the social tensions between the landowners and peasants in the district, and the individual conflicts between Srintil and Darsun.

Similarly, on the surface, the film portrays the exemplary morality of the military officers. For one thing, the officers are pictured as not taking advantage of the female prisoners during the detainment of the accused communists, which is actually at odds with the real situation at the time (see Martyn). Nevertheless, although the only abuser of Srintil during her detainment is Darsun, a civilian or her own kind, the film shows that his action is clearly known about and permitted by a military officer. In addition to subtly questioning the military's morality, this negligence and hypocrisy subvert the novel's dichotomy of madness (as associated with the Communists) and reason (as attributed to the military officers). While the second stage puts the military and the PKI on a relatively equal footing, the third stage frames the military as the worse of the two.

Nevertheless, all of this does not necessarily mean that the film is completely devoid of the military's depoliticising representations, particularly in the character of Rasus. They come partly through a dramatic irony in which Rasus is sent on a separate anti-communist operation and is thus unaware of the fate of Srintil and the other villagers. Second, he is sent to hunt ideological communists like Bakar, not accused communists like the villagers. It should be noted that Rasus shoots Bakar only when the latter is about to escape and that he shows a lot of remorse afterwards, both of which make his action less cruel and more understandable. Third, he spends his time afterwards tracking Srintil's whereabouts, despite

verbal and physical abuse from his superiors and at the risk of being fired from the military forces. Rasus eventually locates her place of detention immediately before she is transferred to another place but he is beaten to unconsciousness when he is about to save her. These representations put him in the position of victim, just like his fellow villagers, and therefore blur his political involvement.

The disruption of the norm thus ends in the third stage of the narrative, but the equilibrium achieved at the end is different from the initial equilibrium. The rural community and its folk dance are depoliticised again but this time as the permanent enemy of the state and society. Despite her great ordeal, Srintil does not become insane and is saved by Rasus, as she is in the novel. Looking tired and tawdry, she still dances before some old womanisers in Dawuan Market, accompanied only by one percussion instrument played by the blind Sakum. When Rasus sees her in that market, she nervously leaves but is stopped by him. He returns the kris that he gave for her dancing charm in the first stage and that she lost during the attack of the village. The film ends with Srintil and Sakum dancing away to the horizon.

There are at least two possible interpretations of this open ending. First of all, Srintil leaves because she feels embarrassed about her 'political error' and thinks that there is no way Rasus and she can be together again. The kris giving and the dancing away show that, respectively, she is forgiven and there is actually hope for their future. The conflict between the ex-communists and the military has thus been resolved or, in other words, depoliticised. The other possible interpretation is that Srintil leaves because she does not want to involve the military man in either her future or that of the village. Here the conflict and the politics are left intact. By returning the kris, the military man himself feels that he no longer belongs to them. The last dance may represent the villagers' confidence in their own future.

All in all, the narrative of the film, as a whole, ambivalently politicises and depoliticises the villagers, the Communists, and the military. This should not be surprising

because, as Flinders and Buller state, “the issue of boundaries or conceptual evisceration is . . . clouded by the fact that depoliticisation and politicisation may actually take place concurrently” (313). Indeed, insisting on a sharp distinction between the two forms of discourse “may risk suggesting a binary opposition that is a crude characterisation of their complex relationship” (297). Repoliticisation and depoliticisation should actually be seen more as “a rebalancing or a shift in the nature of discursive relationships that is a matter of degree — not a move from land to sea, but from cave to mountain or valley to plateau” (297).

In general, ambivalence normally signifies politicisation because it destabilises a unity and reveals conflicts, hitherto obscured, within. However, as in this film adaptation, it can also offer a conciliatory political tone, if not full-scale depoliticisation (see Fig. 27). Arguably, the constant, encompassing ambivalences in the film constitute what Wood and Flinders call “hyper-politicisation”, that is, “the creation of an intense political controversy . . . to then impose a definitive position that closes down political debate (thereby depoliticising the issue)” (164). The villagers, the communists, and the military are being equally and extensively divided/politicised so as to convey them and their actions both as wrong and right. The expected result is thus a conflict resolution or a depoliticisation. The next section will show how this strategy is manifest in the semiotics of the film.

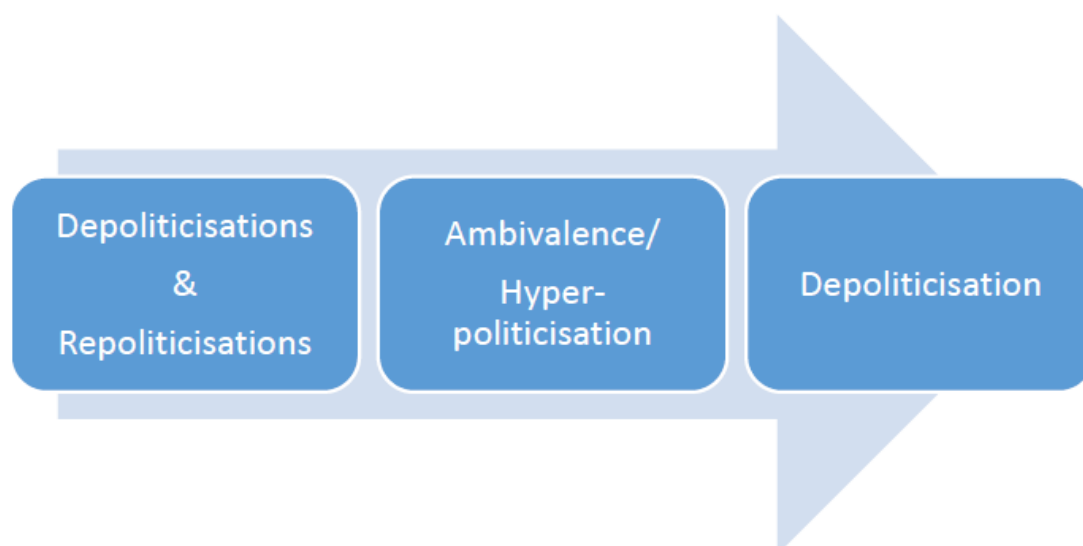


Fig. 26. The depoliticisation and repoliticisation of the narrative and semiotics of *The Dancer*.

3.2.2 The Semiotics

This section will present a critical and analytical discussion of the technical choices made by the filmmaker, cast, and crew of *The Dancer*. The discussion covers four technical areas, namely, the mise en scène, cinematography, editing, and sound. I will discuss these technical aspects mostly together in what I consider important scenes. It is my contention that the semiotics of the film firmly supports the two underlying subject matters of the narrative, namely the secularistic politicisation of the villagers and the conciliatory depoliticisation of the Communists and the military.

The divided villagers: The dormant class divisions in Paruk village are pictured for the first time in a scene at a rich, green field surrounding the village (Fig. 28, above). The rich natural resources of the village are captured through naturally lit, scenic, deep space, extreme longshots. The landowners and enforcers are portrayed as well-dressed while the peasants are half-naked (Fig. 28, below). This mise en scène is rather in conflict with the description of the village in the novel:

Thousands of hectares of wet rice fields surrounding the village of Paruk had been bone dry for seven months. The herons would not find any water, not even a pool a foot wide. Entire paddy fields had been transformed into dry, gray-colored plains. Grassy plants had all withered and died. The only spots of green here and there were the cactus-like *kerokot* that appeared in the fields only during a drought, nature's sacrifice to the sundry forms of locusts and crickets. (Tohari, *Dancer* 1)

This discrepancy was singled out by the novelist in his interview with *Kompas* and admitted by the director in his interview with Pasaribu. Isfansyah defended this choice of setting by arguing that hardship does not necessarily correlate with drought. In fact, the setting underlines the old irony that poverty often occurs in the midst of wealth, as well as underlining the existence of exploitation and class conflict in Paruk.



Fig. 27. The visualisations of the village's rich natural resources and the inherent class conflicts.

The highly political nature of the villagers is mainly portrayed through Darsun's betrayals of Bakar and his fellow villagers. Using an eyeline match, the film shows that Bakar is left dumbfounded by the unexpected interruption of his speech by Darsun (Fig. 29, above). The same eyeline technique is used to highlight Darsun's betrayal of the Paruk villagers at the start of the anti-communist campaign (Fig. 29, below left). The subsequent shots reveal that Darsun is waiting and giving a signal to the incoming militiamen to surround and arrest the villagers. This visual language of betrayal is reinforced by his inter-crossing

with the incoming militiamen (Fig. 29, below right). The eyeline match is also used once again to indicate his betrayal of Srintil during her detainment.



Fig. 28. The betrayals of Darsun, the highly political villager.

The film portrays Paruk's sexuality less extensively than the novel and less erotically than in the first adaptation. What is being presented on the screen is mostly pre- and/or post-sexual intercourse such as when men enter or leave Srintil's bedroom and/or when they lie down next to/below her (Fig. 30, above). The pre- and post-sex are (dis-)connected through jump-cuts. At times, these very limited exposures are further blocked by a closed or half-closed door. Another visual language for sex is Srintil's hair. The pre- and post-sex are signified by, respectively, her loosened hair and/or her doing her hair (Fig. 30, above right and below left). This index can be seen, for instance, after she gives up her virginity to Rasus and after she has sex with him on one of his homecomings. The lovemaking scenes between Srintil and Rasus are slightly longer and more explicit than the sexual scenes involving Srintil and other men (Fig. 30, below). This is fairly unique considering the prevalent norm of presenting sex as rape or prostitution rather than an expression of love.



Fig. 29. The diverse visualisations of sex in *The Dancer*.

One of the distinctive features of the lovemaking scenes between Rasus and Srintil is the soundtrack. They always involve the non-diegetic sound of a cello and/or a violin, at times, together with the non-diegetic sound of ronggeng percussion. By contrast, the sexual scenes between Srintil and other men never incorporate the cello/violin sound and always start with the ronggeng percussion. Thus, the cello/violin and ronggeng percussion appear to represent, respectively, love and tradition. While the sexual scenes between Srintil and other men only signify her duty to the ronggeng tradition, her lovemaking with Rasus epitomises both love and the village's free sex tradition. It is not readily clear why the music directors used the cello/violin for the signification of love. In fact, Sembiring considers it rather out of place for a film about a Javanese community as there are many Javanese melodic, wind or stringed instruments used for the same purpose ("Gripping").

Not only does the film syntagmatically differentiate love-based from tradition-based sex, it also divides the latter further into exploitative and non-exploitative sex. Kathleen Azali, in 2012, states that the distinction between exploitative and cultural/religious prostitution was well-known and well-accepted by the pre-Islamic Indonesian society but has

been suppressed by the Islamic and post-Islamic populace. This deeper division/politicisation is mainly portrayed using symbols and indexes. For instance, Sakarya's new roof and Kartareja's water buffalo symbolise their newly acquired wealth derived from exploiting Srintil's sexuality (Fig. 31, above left). In another scene, there is a wife who is gratefully giving Srintil a gift of new sandals for sleeping with her husband (Fig. 31, above right). This moral division is further visually reinforced by the use of indexes, particularly Srintil's metonymic gestures. In the case of the exploitative Buka Klambu, Srintil projects her disdain by looking at herself in the mirror in utter contempt and disgust. This seeing herself in the mirror is repeated again after she is raped by Darsun (Fig. 31, left-below). In contrast, although she does not love the husbands and practically serves them as a prostitute in the scenes of happily cheated wives, she expresses calmness and even kindness to them (Fig. 30, right-above and 31, right-below).



Fig. 30. The moral divisions as represented by the contrastive symbolic representations (above) and metonymic gestures (below).

The film uses plenty of montages to compress the progress of the narrative and thus bypasses details of the novel, which the critic Soebagyo singles out as one of the weaknesses

of the film. In addition to compressing the narrative's development, they actually serve to highlight contrasts in the film, including those between the villagers. For example, the montage in the first narrative stage exposes the contrast between Rasus, who starts training as a military cadet in a serious, stressful environment, and Srintil, who begins gaining fame and wealth in the relaxed, sexual rural area. This editing technique is employed more powerfully to reinforce the clashes between the Communists and the military.

The ambivalent communists and the military: The positive representations of the political Bakar can be visually seen in his scenes with the Paruk villagers at the *warung*. Normally, a *warung* is a place where poor villagers go not only for food and drink but also for social interaction. The choice of the setting and the fact that he, a highly respected, educated man, is willing to come there easily shows that the character is 'pro-poor'. This further reflects the official instruction of the PKI to its cadres to '*turun ke bawah*' (go down to the masses), which was, in the 1950-60s, quite unusual considering the feudal culture. The atmosphere of the meetings is also set as warm and friendly, and this is partly created by the intimate distance between the participants (Fig. 32). Most of the time Bakar sits with the villagers and very rarely stands up or, for that matter, stands out. This blocking re-emphasises the old Indonesian socialist adagium '*duduk sama rendah, berdiri sama tinggi*' (literally, sit as low, stand as high). Despite this 'egalitarian' mise en scène, Bakar always impresses the villagers, particularly when he turns on a radio, the ironic symbol as previously discussed in the narrative, and lets the villagers listen to it for the first time in their lives (Fig. 32, below). The set is also naturally lit, which paradigmatically sets it apart from the Communists' dark, secret meetings, as portrayed in the military regime's official film about the PKI, *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (1984). This visualisation further subverts the common representation of the Communists in the novel and other works. The Communists have

consistently been associated with provocative, unintelligible, and loud speeches at large political rallies.



Fig. 31. Bakar's scene with Paruk villagers in the warung.

The film also pictures the communist rallies very differently from the ones in the novel and other corresponding texts. They are all portrayed as small and friendly gatherings, and certainly not as “packed with people, always turned into noisy, unruly affairs”, as described in the novel (Tohari, *Dancer* 251). In addition to the small number of attendees, this is visually achieved through the use of deep focus, medium close up, tight framing, intimate distance, and natural light (Fig. 33). The red colour dominates the scene along with the happy faces of the dancing participants. This mise en scène is in stark contrast with the ‘possessed’ or angry faces of the dancing communists in the forest of Kemayoran in the middle of the night in the military’s film *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*. Ironically, the only unfriendly, intrusive faces at the rallies belong to the soldiers guarding the events (Fig. 33, below). This military intrusion is set immediately before the start of the anti-communist campaign.



Fig. 32. The intimate, friendly atmosphere of the communist rallies (above) in contrast to the distant, unfriendly faces of the military officers (below).

Nevertheless, the film still indicates Bakar's and the PKI's involvement in the rural unrest. After the Paruk riot, for instance, the villagers sing and dance, in the same way that the PKI members do in the military's *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (Fig. 34, above). The riot itself replicates the visual convention of rural anarchy in Indonesian cinema: "the action always takes place in the darkness of the night, with a mob of men in dark clothes carrying lit torches. Minimal lighting is used in these scenes—at times only diegetic lighting" (Sen, *Indonesian* 121). Similarly, there is a shot, with a similar mise en scène, in which unidentified people smash the windows of the house of a landowner's enforcer (Fig. 34, below). No direct clue is given that the attack has been orchestrated by Bakar and the PKI, but the fact that the shot is placed (in a montage) between that of a PKI rally and Bakar smiling in the warung cannot help but imply their involvement in the incident.



Fig. 33. The riot in Paruk, replicating the visual convention of rural anarchy and the infamous Lubang Buaya dance (above). The smashing of a rural enforcer's window followed by Bakar smiling in the warung, implying the involvement of the party in the rural unrest (below).

Similar to the novel, the adaptation completely represses symbols of the party throughout the film. Bakar just calls the banned party “my party” in his dialogues with the villagers. The red colour dominates the party’s rallies, banners, and attire although, curiously, Bakar himself never wears red. The Hammer and Sickle, the symbol of the PKI, is completely missing from the visual representations of the party. There are political slogans such as “*TANAH UNTUK RAKJAT*” (land for the people), “*WARUNG RAKJAT*” (people’s food stall), and “*MANIPOL USDEK*” (the Indonesian acronym for Political Manifesto, the 1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Identity). Those slogans are being painted on the roofs of almost every house in Paruk village (Fig. 35). Nevertheless, historically, they can hardly all be called the PKI’s own slogans because they were common mottos during the left-wing Sukarno era. The Manipol Usdek, for instance, is actually the conception of President Sukarno, not of the PKI. Communist-specific slogans like ‘*Ganyang Kapitalis-Birokrat*’ (destroy bureaucrat-

capitalists), ‘*Ganyang Setan Desa*’ (destroy rural devils’), ‘*Buruh-Tani Dipersenjatai*’ (arm workers and peasants) are completely absent from the mise en scène of the communised Paruk.



Fig. 34. The visual ‘communisation’ of Paruk village (above).

The ambivalent nature of the military can be seen from the visual portrayals of Rasus and his mentor Sergeant Binsar. Soldier Rasus looks dashing and disciplined in his military uniform and on his military jeep (Fig. 36, above), syntagmatically opposed to his half-naked, unruly existence as a villager (Fig. 28, below right). Yet, when he visits his old village, he becomes a villager again in both action and gesture. In addition to making love to Srintil, which is against the image of morally perfect military officers, he is also pictured as cleaning and praying at her late grandmother’s grave (Fig. 36, below). This action is considered a remnant of the superstitious pre-Islamic culture and is condemned by some Islamic hardliners as ‘*bidah*’ (heretical) and ‘*haram*’ (forbidden). Rasus also looks awkward and weak in his costume, some civilian shirt and military trousers. His walk is care-free and his posture is bent, highly typical of Indonesian villagers.



Fig. 35. The dashing and disciplined Rasus (above) and the ever immoral and superstitious Rasus (below).

The image of Sergeant Binsar as the benevolent dictator, which was the military regime's self-image, is mainly portrayed through his ambivalent attitude to Rasus. In their first encounter, the sergeant slaps the civilian Rasus, as his civilian shirt signifies, because the latter is fighting with another civilian (Fig. 37, above left). This easily reminds the audiences of the all-powerful military officers during the military era, when they could interfere with any civilian matters without any consequences. Later, the sergeant punches and kicks the non-commissioned officer Rasus for disobeying his order (Fig. 37, above right). In another scene, however, he treats him as an equal and even asks Rasus to eat his food with him (Fig. 37, below left). In addition to the intimate distance, eating with hands signifies his caring manner because Indonesians normally do this only with close friends and relatives. Rasus also catches the sergeant doing a *sholat*, which is a common visual index of religious piety and the only Islamic signifier throughout the film (Fig. 37, below right).



Fig. 36. Sergeant Binsar as a benevolent dictator, explosive but also caring/religious.

The restrained anti-communist campaign: Critics may differ on many points about *The Dancer*, but all of them unequivocally agree that one of the greatest achievements of the adaptation is its portrayal of the anti-communist purge and the military's direct involvement in it (see 0.2). While the military regime insisted that the killings of the Communists were led spontaneously by anti-communist militia without any involvement or order from the military, and were thus a spontaneous horizontal conflict, the film clearly pictures the involvement of the army and their alliance with the militia. The shots of the rural militiamen rounding up the villagers crosscut with those of the military officers approaching the village. Although without identifiable badges, some of the militiamen are clearly wearing the grey uniform of *Barisan Ansor Serbaguna*, the youth militia group of Nadhlatul Ulama, the political competitor of the PKI in Central and East Java (Fig. 38, above). The leader of the militia is reading a list of names that looks identical to that of Sergeant Binsar. The montage ends with the physical meeting between the two forces, one leaving the village to go to the waiting military trucks and another entering the village to follow up the initial search and destruction (Fig. 38, below).



Fig. 37. The alliance of the rural militia and military in a montage.

The military is also shown detaining and torturing the villagers in a sugar factory. It should be noted here that, based on the script, the detention was to be shot in a coconut oil factory. The final choice of the setting is historically more accurate as most communist prisoners in 1965 were detained and interrogated in sugar factories throughout Java due to the shortage of military prisons (Tempo). There are two kinds of framing being used, namely tight and loose framing and they are employed for, respectively, the detention and torture scenes. In the tight framing the *mise en scène* is arranged so that the object photographed has limited or no freedom of movement while the loose framing requires the scene to be spaciouly distributed such that the object has great latitude of movement. The former helps create the suffocating atmosphere of the detention in which many prisoners are squeezed into a small room (Fig. 39, above right). The latter signifies the emotional proximity between the suspects and the interrogators (Fig. 39, above left).

As the novel represses the torture and killing of the accused communists through certain writing techniques, the film does the same by means of specific *mise en scène* and cinematography. The detention and interrogation of the accused communists are shot using

low-key lighting and in high contrast, exposing the inmates but covering the interrogators (Fig. 39). The identity of the interrogators is narrowly revealed through their military boots or sleeves (Fig. 39, above right and below left). The interrogation sometimes takes place off-screen such as behind a closed door (Fig. 39, below right). The same limited visualisation also happens with the taking out of Srintil during her detention time.



Fig. 38. The detention and torture of the villagers as the accused communists.

Furthermore, the military only executes Bakar and other ideological communists, not accused communists like the Paruk villagers. Thus, it is more a political killing of political enemies, and less a slaughter of innocents. This shows that the politicisation of a killing can actually be used to make the action less cold-blooded, less cruel, and more understandable. The execution itself takes place in another historically accurate setting: a riverbank. Using low-key lighting, the film deploys several different techniques of cinematography for the execution. The victim, Bakar, is shot in a high-contrast, shallow focus, medium close-up (Fig. 40, above left). This means that the spectators can easily recognise him and the fear on his face. The killer, Rasus, however, is shot in a low-contrast, shallow focus, close-up (Fig. 40,

above right). The result is that it is less easy to identify him but the spectators can still recognise him and the regret on his face. The execution itself is visualised using deep space, medium longshots and longshots, which effectively hide the sheer brutality of the event (Fig. 40, below).



Fig. 39. The execution of Bakar and other ideologically-driven communists.

It is noteworthy that, while the round-up of the village is shot in broad daylight, which is actually against historical common practice, both the torture and the killing are filmed in low-key lighting/at night. As the arrest also involves violence, the use of low-key lighting does not just cover the brutality of the torture and killing but also more specifically conceals the brutality of the military. The violence during the daylight round-up is entirely committed by the rural militia while the military, which arrives later, only combs out the villagers' houses. By contrast, the violence during the dark detention and execution is all committed by the military officers.

The discussion of the semiotics has just clarified the concurrent hyper-politicisation and depoliticisation in the film as brought forward by the narrative analysis. As is already implicit in the previous sections, *The Dancer* does not exist, and is not brought into existence,

within a cultural vacuum. There are subjects and contexts that have directly and indirectly shaped the film to be what it is. The subjects refer to the people involved in the film adaptation of the novel while the contexts refer to the external factors that may have influenced the subjects and their work. In the next two sections, I am going to explore the subjects and the contexts of *The Dancer* so as to create more, I hope, penetrating meanings behind the text. As I have reviewed the general contexts in the first sub-chapter, the contexts that I am going to discuss here are only those directly related to the issues of secularism and conciliatory politics.

3.2.3 The Filmmaker, Cast, and Crew

In this section, I will introduce and discuss the people involved in the making of *The Dancer*. The filmmaker refers to the producer, the director, and, due to the nature of the film as an adaptation, the screenwriters of the film. Shanty Harmayn acted as the producer and one of the screenwriters while Ifa Isfansyah directed and co-wrote the screenplay. The first and ‘professional’ screenwriter of the film was Salman Aristo, an established figure in the Indonesian film industry. The cast includes the actors who play the major characters in the narrative such as Prisia Nasution (Srintil), Oka Antara (Rasus), Slamet Raharjo (Kartareja), Landung Simatupang (Sakarya), and Lukman Sardi (Bakar). The crew comprises those with leading roles in the production such as Eros Eflin (the art director), Yadi Sugandi (the director of photography), Cesa David Lukmansyah (the editor), as well as Amelya Octavia and Riri Pohan (the casting directors).

Although film is a collective work as opposed to the more solitary endeavour of a novelist, the film’s emphasis on secularism might be related to the shared background of the filmmaker and crew. Hitherto none of the director’s films has touched on the subject of religion, which is fairly unique considering that the religious genre is trending in the country

and many Indonesian directors have been trying their hand at this genre (Heeren 107-29; Heryanto 49-73). Ifa Isfansyah's early film *Garuda di Dadaku* (2009) is overtly patriotic or nationalistic, which in Indonesia is very much synonymous with being secular, that is, transcending/ depoliticising religious conflicts for the salvation of the nation. This is consistent with Elie Kedourie's proposition that "[n]ationalism is a form of secular millenarianism . . . replacing religion as the key to salvation" (Hutchinson and Smith 47). Shanty Harmayn, the producer and co-screenwriter, is not known for producing and writing for religious films either. Salman Aristo, the first screenwriter, was involved in the making of the highly successful Islamic film *Ayat-ayat Cinta* but that is just one of eighteen films that he has so far (co-) written. Yadi Sugandi, the director of photography, is perhaps one of the most nationalistic figures behind the film as he himself has directed a number of nationalistic films such as *Merah Putih* (2009), *Darah Garuda* (2010), and *Hati Merdeka* (2011).

The sexual suppression in the film may have been partly determined by the same internal factor. There are indeed problems with the Institute of Film Censorship and Islamic radicalisation but it would be too simplistic to attribute the visual repression of sex exclusively to the external factors. As a matter of fact, there are many films that expose sensuality and sexuality more explicitly than *The Dancer* that received no protest from Islamic radicals. As Heider, Sen, and, later, Murtagh identify in their respective books, there are ways to expose sexual content in Indonesian cinema without provoking the Institute's censorship and the religious communities' protest, such as framing them as rape and/or the characters as prostitutes. These strategies could easily have been adopted by the filmmaker and crew considering the rape-like nature of the Buka Klambu ceremony and the prostitute-like image of Srintil. As far as this research is concerned, none of the figures mentioned above has ever been involved in films with erotic content. The nationalistic director of photography has even explicitly expressed his disapproval of sexual films:

As I said before, film is a document of a country's civilisation. Thirty to forty years from now, imagine people watching that kind of film. Those who don't know the history of Indonesia will think, Indonesia in 2010 achieved only thus far. If they carefully observe, there were many good films already. So, if we make that kind of film, it means a civilisation regression. (Sugandi, "Kecelakaan" par. 7, my trans.)

Naturally, the background and attitude of the filmmaker and crew go together with the traditional demand of the time. It is impossible to cover all of the unique sexual beliefs and practices of Paruk in the 111-minute film. Judging from his more than a hundred diverse films and the fact that he was once married to a controversial Indonesian Playmate, Cesa David Lukmansyah (the editor) might not have a similar artistic/ideological reservation but rather, he might have been focusing on the technical aspect of time constraints and, as will be explained in the next section, the demands of censors. Although visually suppressed, sexuality is deeply politicised in this film. It seems that the filmmaker did this to rebalance the depoliticisation of the 1965 conflict. Judging from the fresh anti-communist actions in Indonesia (April-May 2016), no matter how controversial a sexual issue is, it is still much safer than a discussion of the 1965 tragedy.

The ambivalent representations of the PKI and the military can also be partly explained by the lack of interest of the filmmaker. As Heryanto observes, young Indonesian filmmakers appear to have little interest in the past political violence (*Identity*). They have "no reason for being particularly interested in such a heavy and depressing theme" (76). In addition, apart from political sensitivity and censure, any filmmakers revisiting the 1965 content-wise must confront a set of challenges that arise from the obscurity of the subject matter. The military's official narrative of the PKI has been seriously challenged by historians and academia (see, for instance, Anderson and McVey; Roosa; Scott) but the lack

of data (due to it being largely destroyed or kept by the military) and freedom makes it difficult to investigate and mount a more definite account of the party's history. As a result, what is circulating in the public space is not far from speculation, accusations, and conspiracy theories. Both problems are revealed by the director and co-screenwriter Ifa Isfansyah:

I took the courage to make this film after I had convinced myself that this novel was about love. So I tried to look at it from a love perspective first. I don't like politics. I don't understand it and don't like it. Doing research, it was the hardest because . . . oh, no . . . reading politics. This film was not about politics, really. I was seeing the politics from contemporary perspectives, from the perspectives of the young generation now. I don't understand the incidence of 65. I don't know and don't want to pretend to know. ("Aku" par. 21, my trans.)

The confession above also indirectly reveals the attitude of the director towards the political content of the novel. Isfansyah actually intended to depoliticise the political novel into a love story, as the first adaptation did. What he means by "the politics from contemporary perspectives" is none other than a form of discursive depoliticisation. All of the involved parties would be stripped of their conflicting political natures and desires. In his directorial vision:

The Dancer is non-partisan; neither pro the PKI, nor pro the military. It is a story about human beings. We don't side with any parties, we side with human beings. The Paruk villagers are human beings, only playing roles based on the costumes they are wearing. You are wearing the green uniform, you are the military. You can be red, too. Or peasants. They are people, illiterate, accidentally becoming involved in many political intrigues. (Isfansyah, "Aku" par. 51, my trans.)

The other two scriptwriters have more or less apolitical attitudes to the story. Salman Aristo, according to Isfansyah, was mainly tasked with transforming the story of the novel to the film structure, or in his words “to change the complicated thing to something simple and visual” (par. 12, my trans.). Shanty Harmain, a business-minded producer from an older generation, made sure that “these two young people do not go off limits” (par. 16, my trans.). The nationalistic cinematographer advocates political unity over conflict and claims that he “became one” with the director (Sugandi, “Mengapa” par. 13, my trans.).

The depoliticisation and politicisation in the film are reinforced by the selection of the cast. The political Kartareja and apolitical Sakarya are played by, respectively, a senior film actor Slamet Raharjo and a senior monologist Landung Simatupang. In addition to his successful acting career, Slamet Raharjo is widely known for his political activism. He regularly plays in a TV show a witty, retired Javanese lord who satirically comments on social and political issues in the country. Landung Simatupang has long been famous for his distinctive skills in theatrical monologue but is not as well-known for political activism. Srintil’s innocence and depoliticisation are to some extent supported by the casting of Prisia Nasution. In contrast to Raharjo and Simatupang, Nasution had never acted in any feature film and had nothing to do with political activism. The highly political character of Darsun is played by Teuku Rifnu Wikana, a young actor consistently cast in bad guy roles. The character of Bakar is played by a famous Indonesian actor, Lukman Sardi. He is well-known for his various good guy roles and has never played a bad guy role in his fairly long career. This supports the positive, or at least ambivalent, characterisation of the communist Bakar. Rasus is just Oka Antara’s second leading role after *Hari untuk Amanda* (2010), in which he also plays the good guy. Antara’s background helps shape the character of Rasus as an innocent, amiable military officer.

Sergeant Binsar is played by Tio Pakusadewo, a senior actor with a strong Javanese background. This choice is rather ironic because, as mentioned in the narrative analysis, the Batakese Sergeant actually replaces the Javanese sergeant of the novel. This transcultural casting is hardly unique as it also happens with the main characters of *Srintil* and *Rasus*. Prisia Nasution is not Javanese and does not speak the Javanese language, let alone the Banyumasan dialect. The critic Sembiring singles out the inevitable language problem: “several scenes feature *Srintil*, played by Prisia Nasution, speaking Javanese, but with the wishy-washy air of a Jakarta teenager in a bad mood” (“Gripping” par. 10). Similarly, Oka Antara is a non-Javanese actor and non-native speaker of the language. All of these factors underline the previously discussed secularist spirit of the film, yet this time this does not concern religion but another equally sensitive subject: ethnicity. *The Dancer*, or at least Amelya Octavia and Riri Pohan (the casting directors), seems to discount the convenience of ethnic/linguistic backgrounds and highlight the diversity and unity of the cast.

It is less straightforward to qualify the art director Eros Eflin’s attitude towards politics due to the minimum information available regarding his other works. His drive for realism in this film, as shown from his location selection and set development, seems to have been eclipsed by his colleagues’ depoliticising vision and techniques. It is equally difficult to predict the general tendency of the editor with his many diverse films. In any case, despite the dominant depoliticising attitude, the film evidently also repoliticises the villagers, the Communists and the military. A possible reason for this is the interplay between the internal factors above and several external considerations, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.2.4 The Government, Society, and Hollywood

This section will address several external factors that may directly or indirectly have influenced the people involved in the film adaptation with regard to its depoliticisation and

repoliticisation. The external factors refer to the government, the society, and the market of post-military Indonesia. The government is not wholly represented by the Institute of Film Censorship for the latter has had a degree of independence since the military era. It is also represented by the law enforcement, who supposedly guarantees the freedom of information and expression vital to the creative process of the people behind a film. The society refers to the prominent literary/film communities as well as the influential social, political, and religious groups. Hollywood represents the strongest external influence on Indonesian cinema, past and present.

Aside from the secularist tendency of the filmmaker, there are also a number of external reasons why *The Dancer* highlights the socio-political condition of the Kejawen community. There has not been much progress since the 1980s, and, to some extent, the community is now more repressed than ever. Although it was not officially acknowledged as a religion by the military regime, the freedom to practise this belief was at least guaranteed by the constitution and enforced by the Suharto government. Even Suharto himself used to be an open follower of Javanese mysticism. Following the collapse of the secular military regime in 1998, there have been continued efforts from the Indonesian Islamic radicals to erase the non-religions completely from the constitution (Salim). There have been numerous physical and verbal terrors on the followers of non-religions as well (Bruinessen).

The film's secularism enabled the filmmaker to transcend/depoliticise all of the religious divisions plaguing the country. Although the moderate Cultural Muslims remain the religious majority in Indonesia, they are also more or less influenced by the current Islamic radicalisation, at the very least in terms of their identity (Heryanto, *Identity*). Most of the time, they act as a silent majority who neither openly agrees with nor oppose the Islamic radicals. The radicals remain in the minority but what they lack in number they compensate for in their outspokenness, boldness, and, not infrequently, terror. The filmmaker simply

could not rely on the protection of the government on this sensitive matter. The government is pragmatic, sometimes adopting an Islamic identity, and at other times a secularistic approach, depending on its political needs. In addition, the literary and film communities have become diverse, ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right, from the traditional to the cosmopolitan (see Herlambang, *Kekerasan*; Heryanto, *Identity*). Finally, as a commercial film aimed mainly at the urban youth market, it seemed best to avoid the commercially unrewarding issues of religion.

The repression of the religious issues to some extent serves its purpose quite well. Unlike the novel, there is neither reported protest from the Islamic communities nor religious censorship from the Institute. The unique secularism of the film pleased both the traditional and cosmopolitan critics. Wening Trisna Asih, in 2013, compliments the film's use of Banyumasan expressions. It is quite rare to find Indonesian films in a local language, let alone a dialect, despite the fact that most Indonesians speak local languages as their first language. Writing for an English-language newspaper, the cosmopolitan *Sembiring* states: "under the direction of Ifa Isfansyah, the rest of the actors relate admirably to the socio-cultural elements that wrap each of an ensemble of characters befitting a Shakespearean tragedy" ("Gripping" par. 11).

As mentioned previously, the visual suppression of sex seems to have been motivated by the current Islamic radicalisation as well as the official censorship. The protests of the Islamic radical groups towards other films might have deterred *The Dancer*'s creators from presenting more sexual content on screen because that can result in the banning of films by the Institute of Film Censorship (see Kusumaryati). When it comes to sexuality, there has not been a significant change from the censorship of the Suharto era. Murtagh observes that "displays of sex and intimacy continue to attract the concerns of censors, albeit erratically" (3). As described by the director:

Before we gave the print of the film to the Institute of Film Censorship, we had a chance to meet them. We gave them the DVD of *The Dancer*, still in rough cut. Some of them watched it, and we got some feedback. Reduce the sexual acts . . . We followed them . . . But, censorship really depends on who is in charge. The team who watched *The Dancer* in the second meeting were different from the first. That team seemed to have a different understanding from the first team. They envisioned that in a sexual act, the man was on top of the woman, the woman's hands were on the back of the man, the clothes were opening, and cut. If you wanted to show the after-sex moment, you only had a few seconds. (Isfansyah, "Aku" par. 54, my trans.)

The report above shows that the censorship process in the post-military era is still done in multiple stages just as in the military era. It also shows that the Institute of Film Censorship maintains more or less similar concepts regarding permissible sex acts on screen such as men must be on top, no explicit contact, and diversion to another object. More importantly, this also indicates that the censorship guideline is still quite generic and therefore open to different interpretations. This ultimately gives freedom and power to who controls - or whatever preoccupies - the Institute of Film Censorship. Reflecting the state and spirit of the era, the Institute is now heavily influenced by the post-Islamists, who are politically liberal but rather conservative *vis a vis* sexual representations. As reported by the director:

The lovemaking there was not porn. But it was eventually cut. The politics was said to be okay. The censor team consisted of many: from the military, religions, and others. Even it was mentioned that the one who said it was okay was from the military. The reason: people's concerns now were no longer about the military, but about religions. (par. 55, my trans.)

The representations and repressions of the Communists and the military reflect the complex relations between the filmmaker and the Institute of Film Censorship. The permitted visualisations of the communist and anti-communist campaigns can be interpreted as a change in the military's attitude, which was also admitted by the military representative at the Institute. Nonetheless, the repressed visualisations of the original signifiers, the torture and killing of the Communists, were also influenced by the demands from the same Institute. The director also recalls in his first meeting with the Institute that it specifically asked the filmmaker to "delete the head drowning act" (Isfansyah, "Aku" par. 53, my trans.). Similar to cases with other films, this might have encouraged the filmmaker of *The Dancer* to self-censor.

Furthermore, the representations and repressions of the Communists and the military may also have been driven by another external factor, as can be deduced from the ambiguous ending of the film. The two possible meanings are actually a reflection of the two equally strong groups and discourses about the military in contemporary Indonesia. Civil society, particularly the left-wing organisations, has demanded that the military must take responsibility for the anti-communist campaign, and also stop interfering in civilian affairs. The dual function of the military, that is, as the security and the socio-political force, has been officially revoked. However, as discussed in the first sub-chapter, there are a considerable number of civilian groups who would support the return of the military to the leadership of the country. In fact, when the film was produced, the president of the country was Soesilo Bambang Yoedoyono, a retired army general who won the first two direct elections in Indonesia and succeeded the three civilian presidents after Suharto.

The complexity and ambivalence of the film generally received appreciation from the widely-divided public. The left-wing groups welcomed the marked expressions of political divisions in the film. Writing for the left-wing *Indoprogress* in 2011, Suluh Pamuji begins his

critique by saying: “*The Dancer* by a young director Ifa Isfansyah should be considered a phenomenon in the Indonesian film industry, which dares to take on the love theme with a more serious frame: poverty and the Indonesian political tragedy of 1965” (par. 1, my trans.). The pro-military groups are content with the positive representations of Rasus. Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine whether the government welcomes the ambiguous representation of the military and the PKI. On the one hand, the government has repeatedly stated that it supports the investigation into the anti-communist campaign and the rehabilitation of the accused communists as demanded by non-governmental organisations. Yet, on the other hand, it never does anything significant so as not to provoke the military and the religious communities. At best, the film represents the undecided position of the post-military government.

Unfortunately, the film failed in the market, attracting fewer than 300,000 viewers by December 2011 and puzzling the critics. Yan Wijaya, a senior film observer, says the film should have easily garnered one million viewers and concludes: “there must be something wrong, but I don’t know where the problem is” (Fahrul par. 7, my trans.). Despite the director’s effort to highlight the love story and tone down the politics, the film is still strongly associated with politics and considered a political film, a category that politically weary Indonesians despise. The fact that *The Dancer* contains much political ambivalence does not help. For too long, Indonesian audiences have been denied the complexity of political history, and any representations of it in film. The audience, as a result, finds *The Dancer* with its ambivalences quite puzzling, if not confusing. As Sembiring reports: “some teenagers who were laughing and giggling at the beginning of the film left the theatre with a puzzled look” (“Gripping” par. 15). This “puzzled look” apparently precipitated the market failure of *The Dancer*.

As with the first adaptation, it is necessary to contextualise the second adaptation not just in relation to the national politics and cinema, but in relation to world affairs and the films produced within this period. While *Blood and Crown* is homologous to the Vietnam War films, there are similarities between the 1965 tragedy films and American Civil War films despite the obvious differences in setting. This should not be surprising considering the long and heavy influences of Hollywood on Indonesian cinema, as traced by Biran in *Sejarah Film 1900-1950: Bikin Film di Jawa* (2009). Hollywood's influences still eclipse those of Hong Kong and Korean cinema, despite the latter's growing popularity in Indonesia. The influences of films from other post-colonial countries with similar political issues remain unseen due the lack of availability of the films and studies as well as the language barriers.

Gary Gallagher, in *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten* (2008), explores how Hollywood and popular arts portray the American Civil War. He outlines the four major traditions in Civil War films, namely, the Lost, Union, Emancipation, and Reconciliation Causes. The Lost Cause comprises a series of representations that casts the South's rebellion as a noble struggle against impossible challenges, represses the significance of slavery in creating separation and war, and celebrates Confederates gallantry on the battlefield, such as in *Gone with the Wind* (1939). The Union Cause portrays the war as an effort to defend a united nation in the face of the separatist actions that endangered "both the work of the Founders and, by extension, the future of democracy" (2). The Emancipation Cause sees the conflict as a struggle to liberate slaves and eliminate a harmful influence on American society, as can be seen in *Glory* (1989). Finally, the Reconciliation Cause signifies "an attempt by white people North and South to extol the American virtues both sides manifested during the war, to exalt the restored nation that emerged from the conflict, and to mute the role of African Americans", such as in *Gettysburg* (1993) and *Gods and Generals* (2003) (2).

What is immediately useful here is that this cinematic model vividly pictures the complexity of politicisation and depoliticisation, as pointed out by Flinders and Buller (see 3.2.1). It shows once again that depoliticisation and politicisation may occur concurrently in the same text, which is the principal argument of the current analysis of *The Dancer*. For instance, while the Lost Cause promotes the new debate on the justifiability of the Southern cause, it simultaneously represses the debate on slavery. Similarly, the Reconciliation Cause can only work by discursively politicising the virtues of the South and depoliticising the issue of slavery. This comprehensive model may also have influenced other Indonesian films concerned with civil conflict.

Naturally, there are undeniable differences between the American Civil War and the Indonesian anti-communist campaign. First of all, it is rather premature to call those four representations ‘traditions’ in Indonesia due to the relatively short distance between the real event in 1965 and the present day as well as the unique political situation. Perhaps, only the Union-like Cause can be legitimately considered a tradition in the country because the rest have just gained momentum since the collapse of the authoritarian regime in 1998. Second, it might be wrong to call the anti-communist campaign a war. It is a massacre *par excellence*, almost without any resistance from the losing side. Third, the losing side in the Civil War could live and express their identity quite freely in the post-war era whereas the Indonesia ex-communists could not do either, even after the toppling of the military regime. Fourth, the 1965 conflict did not carry racial issues or, at least, these were not as strong as in the Civil War. If any, it was the military’s effort to tie the PKI with Communist China and, in turn, Chinese Indonesians.

Despite those differences, there are revealing similarities between the two conflicts and their cinematic representations. Just like Lost Cause, the sympathisers of the PKI and accused communists often portray the PKI’s actions at the time as an admirable struggle

against feudalism, capitalism, and the exploitation of people in general. This tendency can be seen in the film documentaries on the victims of the anti-communist campaign, as discussed in 3.1. On the other hand, the military and anti-communist militia consistently frame the PKI's actions, including the alleged killing of six army generals, as a betrayal of the Republic of Indonesia, which is typical of the Union Cause. *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*, whose very translation is *The Treachery of G30S/PKI*, quite easily represents this framing game along with *Operasi Trisula* (1986). It is noteworthy that while it is hard to find an example of this cause in the American Civil War films, it is the dominant cause in Indonesian films on the 1965 massacre. The Emancipation Cause, largely represented by the Indonesian liberal humanists, portrays the conflict as a struggle to liberate people from the impending communist tyranny and remove the hostile influence on Indonesian culture and society. This cause is embodied, for instance, by *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1983) and *Gie* (2005). The Reconciliation Cause, which I believe *The Dancer* has taken up, represents an attempt by Indonesians to show the virtues and vices that both sides manifested during the Indonesian Revolution (1945-1965), to justify the New Order that came after the campaign, and to silence the victims of the conflict.

Reconciliationist films represent a relatively current trend of seeing the Civil War and the 1965 massacre as a sad example of a society somehow falling into a bloody conflict. They focus on the innocence of the people on both sides but avoid talking about the political divisions that led to the conflict. The conflicting parties share responsibility for the conflict, just as they share their pain. This mode of representation is also commercially sound as it does not offend the different factions in the society. John Huston's 1951 film adaptation of Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* presents a couple of typical reconciliationist scenes, which greatly embellish Crane's original story. The long exchange between the two pickets originally takes up just thirteen lines in the novel and includes a single sentence of

dialogue. The Yankee's encounter with the rebel across the river only makes him temporarily regret war. Crane's passage concerning the prisoners offers four words of dialogue and far less personal revelation than the film's screenplay. In the same way, Isfansyah's *The Dancer* greatly expands Tohari's very short narrative of the anti-communist campaign (see 1.2.2). There is no rounding up of the village, let alone the torture and killing of the Communists in the novel. There is no mention of Rasus trying to find and save Srintil and other villagers.

The Civil War section of *How the West Was Won* (1962), directed by John Ford, gives a different slant on reconciliation. Although an unusual variety of reconciliation, the film underscores the similarity of two antagonists both disgusted by the war and unconcerned with national issues. A similar attitude is markedly shown by Rasus and Srintil in *The Dancer*. *Gettysburg* (1993) and *God and Generals* (2003), both by Ron Maxwell, offer a far more traditional reconciliationist model in the scenes involving both officers and common fighting men. The latter is parallel to the shared fate of Rasus as a low-rank officer and the Paruk villagers, as discussed in the third stage of the narrative.

The Emancipation, Union, and Reconciliation traditions overlap in many respects, as do the Lost and Reconciliation models. Nonetheless, each of the models can be seen as a discrete attempt to understand and/or portray the American Civil War and the Indonesian anti-communist campaign. For example, the Union and the Emancipation sympathisers join in expressing joy at the defeat of the Confederacy but at times diverge in seeing the issue of slavery. For the Union Cause, the war represents a tool to defeat the Confederacy and remove a long-standing threat to the development of the republic. For the Emancipation Cause, the slave liberation stands as the most important objective of the northern war effort and a mighty blow for the advancement of African Americans. Similarly, the Indonesian military and liberal humanists jointly applaud the collapse of the PKI but often diverge in discussing the de-communisation. For *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*, the military action represents an effective

means of punishing the betrayers, undermining Communism, and removing a long-standing threat to the development of the republic. For the main character of *Gie*, however, the massacre represents a violation of human rights, which he and his friends are fighting for.

Furthermore, supporters of the Lost and Reconciliation traditions may agree to suppress the slavery-related politics of separation, but many Lost Cause sympathisers, whatever their official statements about loyalty to the United States of America, persist in “celebrating a struggle for southern independence that had nearly undone the Founders’ handiwork” (Gallagher 4). Comparably, the ex-communists in a documentary *Tjidurian 19* (2009) tone down their past confrontational actions against what they called ‘counter-revolutionaries’ and many of them still believe that those actions were called for. The Union and Reconciliation jointly laud the fact that one united nation emerged from the war, and anyone who cherishes the Union has to welcome on some level the reintegration of former rebels into the national history and citizenry. Yet unlike the reconciliationists, who avoid the question of which cause was more just, the Unionists are certain that the Confederates were in the wrong. The former accurately represents the ambivalent attitude of *The Dancer* while the latter represents the strong confidence of the military and anti-communist groups in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*.

There are several reasons why films on the Civil War and 1965 tragedy have been on the rise. Gallagher attributes the returning interest to the American Civil War in the 1980s to the increasing distance from the Vietnam War and the use of military strength by the Reagan administration as a tool of national policy. Nevertheless, these two events obviously cannot explain the ever-strong interest in this theme in the 2010s. Drew Faust, a Civil War historian, sees relations between the recent interest and the current War on Terror although she does not really explain them in detail. Not only does this war change world politics, but it also changes the domestic politics in America. Responding to the real and imagined threats of Islam and

terrorism, the country falls again into the old divisions between the ‘liberal’ North and the ‘conservative’ South.

The Indonesian situation is slightly more complex. Like many other countries, Indonesia is conducting its own War on Terror albeit only domestically. Despite the inevitable complexities, this domestic war generally also divides the country into liberal and conservative groups. Yet, as the world’s largest Muslim population, and in contrast to their American counterparts, the Indonesian conservatives are pro-Islam and their more radical elements even justify terrorist acts. The Indonesian War on Terror is not the main factor behind the resurging interest in the 1965 tragedy. The real factor is the collapse of the military regime and the interest in the regime’s human rights abuses. Although it has not directly created the interest in the tragedy, the Indonesian War on Terror strongly influenced the structure and semiotics of the film. While the liberals are generally open to the investigation and representation of the 1965 tragedy, the conservatives are fully against it. This explains the ambivalent representations of the military and communists in the narrative and the restrained visual portrayals of the anti-communist campaign. The liberal-conservative division is also apparent in the inclusion and exclusion of religion and sexuality in *The Dancer*.

3.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the film *The Dancer* is both politically progressive and conservative as opposed to the less ambivalent judgements of previous critiques. The adaptation displays a revolutionary vigour by hyper-politicising the depoliticised content of the novel. Yet, this very hyper-politicisation also leads to the depoliticisation of the conflicts it originally exposes. Echoing the powerful words of Leon Trotsky, the analysis shows that “the revolution [has been] betrayed”.

The Dancer neglects altogether the issue of religion and instead promotes the idea of secularism. The film's secularism constitutes concurrently an act of discursive repoliticisation and one of depoliticisation. On the one hand, *The Dancer* reintroduces the forgotten, non-religious dynamics of a religious minority while it simultaneously suppresses the Cultural Islamism of the original text and post-Islamism of the new era. The narrative and the semiotics ambivalently politicise and depoliticise the conflicting parties, namely the villagers, the Communists, and the military. While ambivalence generally signifies politicisation, it can also offer a conciliatory political tone, if not depoliticisation. The constant, extensive ambivalences in the film constitute what Wood and Flinders call "hyper-politicisation" (164). The conflicting parties are equally and thoroughly politicised so as to make them (and their actions) equally wrong as well as equally right, which results in a conflict resolution or a depoliticisation.

The film's emphasis on secularism might be traced back to the shared nationalistic attitude of the filmmaker and crew. Similarly, the fact that none of the figures behind *The Dancer* has ever been involved in sexual films seems to affect the representation of sexuality in the film. The ambivalent representations of the PKI and the military can also be partly explained by the interest and knowledge of the filmmaker and crew in regard to the 1965 conflict. The selection of the cast powerfully reinforces the depoliticisation and politicisation in the adaptation.

In addition to the internal reasons, there are several external considerations regarding why the film politicises and depoliticises the aforementioned issues and parties. First of all, the film seems to take into account the current sociological state of Indonesian society, particularly in relation to the growing religious tensions. The secularism helps the film to transcend/depoliticise all of the religious divisions. The sexual suppression in the film seems to be motivated by both the current Islamic radicalisation and the official censorship. The

protests of the Islamic radical groups towards several films might have deterred *The Dancer* from exposing more sexual content on screen, for this frequently results in the banning of films by the post-Islamist censors, who are quite receptive to political content, but rather sensitive to sexual representations.

The representations and repressions of the Communists and the military reflect the complex relations between the filmmaker and the censors. The permitted portrayals of the anti-communist campaign can be seen as a change in the Institute's attitude. Nonetheless, the repressed visualisations of the torture and killing of the Communists were also influenced by the demands of the same institution. Further, this ambivalence may also have been driven by the two strong groups and discourses in contemporary Indonesia: the anti- and pro-military.

The complexity and ambivalence of the film generally received appreciation from the widely-divided public. Anti-military organisations see *The Dancer* as brave enough to visualise the anti-communist campaign and the military's involvement while pro-military groups are content with the positive portrayals of the military main male character. Despite the director's effort to make the film less political, the film is still strongly associated with politics and considered a political film, which generally does not sell well.

Although films in post-colonial countries might be created in response to their own needs, they are not immune from the influences of the empire. The second adaptation appears to have been influenced by the reconcillationist American Civil War films, particularly in showing the virtues and vices of both sides, justifying the new era that came after the campaign, and silencing the victims of the conflict.

Conclusion

In his 2009 critique, Eckart Voigts contends that “adaptation studies is often conflated with the narrow scope of ‘novel into film studies’” and that “the ‘literature-into-film’ field is merely an ancient, neglected alcove in the large public house of intermediality” (139). Promoting intermediality, he admits that “there is one area, however, where the terminologies of intermediality do not help much” because “[an adaptation’s] success, impact and relevance is crucially determined by the cultural situation in which it emerges” (149). He therefore suggests that “future adaptation studies will have to merge the study of social constructions of national, regional, local, ethnic, gendered or class- and age-based identities and research into transcultural images and stereotypes with hitherto mainly textual questions of intertextual and intermedial contact in adaptation studies” (150).

In this study, I have shown that even in the narrow, ancient world of transferring literature into film, much has been left unexplored, including the interaction of intracultural and intercultural elements and textual questions. In particular, I have endeavoured to draw

attention away, not only from the domination of Anglo-American adaptations but also from the Anglocentrism of contemporary postcolonial criticism. Post-colonial criticisms, which are supposed to counter the Anglo-American hegemony, have ironically fallen into a new kind of Anglocentrism with the domination of texts from former British colonies over those from beyond. Moreover, as Arun Mukherjee suggests, post-colonial studies have relied for too long on the homogenising construct of the Centre (the West) versus the Periphery (the East), implying that “we do not write out of our own needs but rather out of our obsessions with an absent other” (6). The fact is that post-colonial countries have “their own internal centres and peripheries, their own dominants and marginal”, and their own conflicts (Mukherjee 6).

The thesis addresses the problems above by, first, introducing and investigating literary and cinematic works from Indonesia, a non-British former colony. *The Dancer* and its adaptations were focused on domestic conflicts in the country and created mainly for local readers/spectators. Second, the study deals with the longstanding issue in Indonesian literature and cinema: the practices of depoliticisation (typically associated with the government’s censorship and imprisonment) and politicisation (the writers and filmmakers’ attempts to promote social issues in spite of the government’s repression). Third, in investigating the novel and the adaptations, the thesis begins from and focuses more on the intra-cultural or national factors (Indonesian history, politics, literature, and cinema) rather than the inter-cultural or transnational elements (Hollywood), without denying the existence of the latter. Fourth, the fact that the theories brought to this study are neither too universalist (like, for instance, Marxism and Structuralism) nor too particularist (like ‘mimicry’ and ‘indigeneity’) allows the research to maintain the balance between the intra-cultural and intercultural elements in the analysis.

It is my contention that the struggles in the novel and the adaptations represent the latent conflict between depoliticising and repoliticising tendencies, by which competing

parties have attempted to move issues within and beyond the limits of traditional politics. In turn, the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in the texts closely relate to the Foucauldian discursive exclusion and inclusion as well as the Bourdieusian conflict of capital. The current study set out four key objectives, namely, 1) to identify the discursive depoliticisation and repoliticisation in the novel and adaptations; 2) to explore the contexts in which the novel and the adaptations were respectively produced, in relation to the governmental, societal, and discursive depoliticisation and politicisation within and beyond the country; 3) to investigate the subjects and their politics in dealing with those external factors in the writing and production of the novel and adaptations; and finally 4) to determine the impacts of the depoliticisation and politicisation on the readers and spectators.

Chapter One examined the depoliticisation and politicisation in the Indonesian military era and Ahmad Tohari's novel. The military era was characterised by a total depoliticisation whereby the government enforced "the denial of politics" in all sectors (Wood and Flinders 136). Reputedly critical of the military regime, the novel, for the most part, supports the governmental, societal, and discursive depoliticisation by the regime. In the first part of the novel, Tohari politicises the long depoliticised Kejawen community by portraying it as a vibrant community with sophisticated politics and sexuality. Through the character of Srintil, the erotic dancer, the author seemingly gives a voice to the triple-repressed subject in the societal and governmental discourse in Indonesia: a female prostitute in a backward community. Nevertheless, the novel exposes this hidden side of the rural and religious community only to condemn it as immoral. Simultaneously, it presents a depoliticised side of the village, particularly the apolitical principles and practices of Sufism, and condones it. This Sufism, to an extent, represented a discursive challenge to the economic-oriented government and cosmopolitan literary circles. Nevertheless, Tohari and

his Sufism accepted, if not supported, the depoliticisation of Islam by the secular regime and the liberalist-humanist literary communities.

In the second part of the novel, the author continues to depoliticise the Kejawen community by portraying them as innocent victims of the Indonesian Communist Party (the PKI). By portraying it as highly political, *The Dancer* actually depoliticises the PKI in that it only reinforces what has long been believed about the banned party. The depoliticisation of the PKI was an area of convergence of the author's religiosity and the regime's anti-communist ideology. Ironically, the mere appearance of the Communists, be it negative or positive, attracted the interest of the public in the anti-communist country. While the PKI represents the negative side of the city, the military, through the character of Rasus, stands for the positive face of the metropolis. In contrast to the PKI's political exploitation of sexuality, the military is portrayed as asexual or, at least, not sexually exploitative. The novel also represses and depoliticises the military's persecution and killing of the suspected communists through the pretexts of self-defence, ignorance, and guilt.

In the final part, Srintil is pitched against one of the ruling classes in the military era: the civilian professional class. The novel politicises the allegedly apolitical class and undermines its claimed disinterestedness, thus drawing parallels between the professionals and the Communists. While exposing and politicising the civilian professionals, the novel represses and depoliticises the exploits of the military professionals as the main pillar of the military regime. This strategy saved the author from the retribution of the regime's ideological policing while simultaneously offering his readers the illusion of resistance to the regime. He also received critical acceptance from both the liberal-humanist literary circles and, later, the left-wing circles. The novel has enjoyed a wide readership and been adapted twice, which is very rare in Indonesia.

In Chapter Two, I addressed the depoliticisation and politicisation of the cinema of the Suharto era and the surviving script of the novel's first adaptation. In general, military-era films were more apolitical than military-era novels mainly because of the multi-layered censorship and commercial factors, which often resulted in self-depoliticisation by filmmakers. Failing to locate the film, I went further by reviewing the base and superstructure of Indonesian film archiving. By doing so, I identified the reasons why *Blood and Crown* has been marginalised and forgotten, and is now missing. These are the poor infrastructure of Indonesian film archiving, the mediocre status of film adaptation and adaptation studies, and the unfortunate fate of a commercially unsuccessful popular film adapted from a commercially successful canonical novel.

The script of the first adaptation does not contain as much religious content as the novel but is less secular than the second adaptation. The *Srintil* of the first film fulfils the typical representations of women in military-era films such as being passive rather than active, feminine rather than masculine, and silent rather than outspoken, all of which can be traced back to colonialist/orientalist discourses (Sen, *Indonesian* 131-156). This is a case of what I call 'double depoliticisation', that is, when a similar issue is depoliticised by the empires and continued by post-colonial powers for a similar purpose. Although the script does not exploit *Srintil*'s sexuality as significantly as the critics suggest about the film, it still implies the exoticism of the village's sexuality and helps divert attention from the more political content of the novel. The casting of Indo-Eurasian actors in the film reflects the ambivalent attitude of the outwardly anti-western country to the old and new western empires. The fact that the regime and society silently accepted rather than actively debated this ambivalence is a clear case of depoliticisation.

Blood and Crown transforms the political drama novel into a type of local action film called *silat*. The male protagonists' actions resemble those of John Rambo in *Rambo: First*

Blood, which gained immense popularity in Indonesia a year before the release of *Blood and Crown*. The appropriation of this depoliticising Hollywood action film by the depoliticising local action film represents another instance of double depoliticisation. Finally, the adaptation also brings forward the issue of city versus village, particularly through the action of Rasus and Srintil leaving the village for the city. This kind of resolution is a standard ending for popular films of the military era and is closely related to the issue of depoliticisation, as it suppresses the ugly side of the military's cities.

Chapter Three examined the depoliticisation and repoliticisation in the post-military films and the second adaptation of the novel. The film, *The Dancer*, represents the spirit of repoliticisation of early post-military Indonesia while depicting the tendency to depoliticisation of the current post-military era. The film neglects altogether the issue of religion and instead promotes the idea of secularism, which constitutes concurrently an act of discursive repoliticisation and one of depoliticisation. On the one hand, the film reasserts the forgotten, non-religious (sexuality and class antagonism) dynamics of the Kejawen community but, on the other hand, it suppresses the religiosity of the original text as well as the current era. Furthermore, the second adaptation equally divides/politicises the villagers, the Communists, and the military so as to make them equally wrong as well as equally right, and this ambiguity ultimately results in a conflict resolution or a depoliticisation. This is consistent with what Wood and Flinders name "hyper-politicisation", that is, "the creation of an intense political controversy . . . to then impose a definitive position that closes down political debate (thereby depoliticising the issue) (164).

The politicisation and depoliticisation in the second adaptation are motivated by both internal and external factors. The film's emphasis on secularism might be related to the shared 'nationalistic' attitude of the filmmaker as well as the demands of the interreligious situation. Its secularism enables the film to transcend/depoliticise all of the religious conflicts

currently plaguing the country. The visual suppression (but not the politicisation) of sex in the film seems to be motivated by both the current Islamic radicalisation and the post-Islamist censorship. The permitted and restrained visualisations of the Communist and anti-communist campaign can be seen as the censors' changing political attitude as well as the continued battle between the anti- and pro-military groups. Despite the filmmaker's efforts to tone down the politics, the film was still strongly associated with politics and considered a political film, which the politically weary Indonesians tended to avoid. Transculturally, the second adaptation appeared to be influenced by the reconciliant American Civil War films, particularly in showing the virtues and vices of both sides, justifying the new era that came after the campaign, and silencing the victims of the conflict.

Taken together, the analysis shows that the depoliticisation and politicisation in the novel and the film adaptations generally correspond with the depoliticisation and politicisation in the governmental, societal, private arenas in their respective eras, particularly on the problems of religion, sexuality, and politics. There are delays in time, complications, indirect or relatively distant relationships, and even mediation, but there is a fundamental homology or correspondence of structure between them. The novel and the first adaptation embody the typical depoliticisation during the Indonesian military era in which different discourses and practices were only possible as a pretext/justification for the regime's violent or non-violent suppression. Long applauded as the first novel to tell about the persecuted and banned PKI, *The Dancer* essentially reiterates what the military regime said about the party and thus removes the possibility of new debates on the party and the military's anti-communist massacre in 1965. The novel also introduces the relatively unknown and unique religious discourses and sexual practices in the Javanese community only to point out their backwardness and immorality and, therefore, to rationalise the necessity of their relegation in the modern, moral military era. In a similar way, the first adaptation politicises the 'thugs' as

a product of westernisation and an enemy of the state to justify their violent repression. The second adaptation, however, signifies the early hyperpoliticisation and the on-going depoliticisation in the Indonesian post-military era. It simultaneously reproduces and reinterprets the Javanese community, the PKI, and the military in the novel so as to exhaust the ongoing debates on these conflicting parties. All of this shows that, despite their subversion and resistance in the texts, the novelist and the filmmakers basically play the same tune as the rest of the country and, for that matter, the world. In spite of their obvious focus on domestic affairs, there are traces of Hollywood's depoliticising models in both adaptations, particularly with regard to the Vietnam War and the American Civil War cinema.

There are several theoretical implications of the current study for the theory of depoliticisation, adaptation studies, and post-colonial adaptation. First of all, the study has shown that depoliticisation and politicisation extend over numerous areas as well as varying significantly from one place to another, possibly far beyond the imagination of Matthew Flinders and Matt Wood, who limitedly "focus[] . . . on emergent tensions and trends of depoliticisation (and re-politicisation) in liberal democratic states" (147), and never identify literature and film as key sites of discursive depoliticisation. As depoliticisation is deemed to be integral part of neo-liberalism and/or neo-colonialism, this research should be a valuable addition to the field of post-colonial studies. The study's discussion of the governmental, societal, and discursive depoliticisation in Indonesia has revealed how the global powers, with the active help of the local governments, media, intellectuals, and art workers, have tried to overcome political resistance in the post-colonial country. This has been done less with the hard power such as direct military interventions and economic restrictions than the soft power such as the championing of professionalism (non-elected governmental institutions), individualism (individual rights over social deliberations), and liberal humanism (art for art's

sake). This, as the discussion has further shown, does not go unopposed or as exactly planned. In Indonesia, professionalism, individualism, and liberal humanism can join in unholy matrimony with militarism, capitalism, and religious fundamentalism.

With regard to post-colonial adaptation studies, this research has demonstrated the importance of ‘cultural inwardness’ and ‘cultural insiders’, which have been suppressed by the obsession over the conflict between the West and the East. Rather than fixating on what an Eastern text wants to say to the Western audience, post-colonial studies need to find out first and foremost how the text shapes, and is being shaped, by readers/spectators who belong to the society to which the novelist or film adapter is affiliated through religion, politics, culture, and class. In addition, the nature of the relationship between the East and the West is not necessarily antagonistic, corruptive, and/or subversive; it can be mutualistic, productive, and/or cooperative, as in the case of double depoliticisation.

Finally, the integration and application of the theories of depoliticisation, Foucauldian discourse analysis, and Bourdieusian capital have provided a new outlook on the political dimension of adaptation as they have revealed new principles, actors, arenas, tactics, and complexities in ostensibly political or apolitical adaptations. The study has shown that every adaptation is inherently political. Apolitical or, to be more precise, depoliticised adaptations often serve the political needs of the ruling classes. In addition, a highly politicised remediation can at times be a highly depoliticised adaptation in disguise. The study further shows that adaptations stand in at least three different political arenas such as government, society, and individual with their distinctive players, issues, and interests. Although adaptations mainly perform discursive acts of depoliticisation or politicisation, they frequently shape and reinforce social reforms and governmental decisions.

Despite the far-reaching implications, a number of important limitations need to be considered. First, the research examined one Indonesian novel and two Indonesian film

adaptations, one of which is currently missing. It has not taken into account film adaptations from other countries with similar backgrounds (non-British former colonies with a strong military presence) mainly due to the lack of availability of those films and their studies. As a result, this study might run the risk of looking like an ill-reputed ‘case study’, which Robert B. Ray famously criticises in his article “The Field of Literature and Film” (2000). In his own words:

Without benefit of a presiding poetics, film and literature scholars could only persist in asking about individual movies the same unproductive layman’s question (how does the film compare with the book?), getting the same unproductive answer (The book is better). Each article seemed isolated from all the others; its insights apparently stopped at the borders of the specific film or novel selected for analysis. (44)

It should be noted, however, that Ray does not reject all case studies in adaptation studies but those stubbornly leaning towards fidelity and/or New Criticism. After all, he himself applauds elsewhere in the same article how Roland Barthes “subject[s] a single Balzac novella to what he called a slow motion reading” (41). Agreeing with Ray’s concern but criticising his overgeneralisation, Cartmell and Whelehan assert, in 2010, that “adaptation critics know only too well how much easier it is to work through a critical position by the use of a key example, just as Barthes’s *S/Z* would be the lesser theoretical text without its focus on *Sarrasine*” (*Impure* 55). The heavily context-dependent nature of this research should adequately free itself from the “inadequacy” of New Criticism (Ray 45). This study could not avoid comparing and contrasting the novel and the films, which Ray may call “the unproductive layman’s question” (44), but it is certainly more than just that and is acutely aware of the issues of fidelity.

In fact, this study of depoliticisation stands as an invitation to review and re-evaluate the now infamous concept of fidelity. A similar call has been made by, to name a few, Erica Sheen (2013), Nico Dicecco (2015), and Casie Hermansson (2015). In the case of the current study, the notion of fidelity can be closely compared to the process of depoliticisation in that both attempt to close down new interpretations of and debates on adapted texts. While total fidelity and total depoliticisation are a long-discredited utopia, striving for fidelity as well as depoliticisation is a psychological default of and survival tool for many adapters in Indonesia and, perhaps, other post-colonial countries. This is more true of post-colonial adaptations on domestic problems, such as *Blood and Crown of the Dancer* and *The Dancer*, than of those on East-West issues, such as *Do Phool* (1958) as studied by Michael Lawrence in 2011 and *Maya Memsaab* (1992) by Mary Donaldson-Evans in 2009. The latter category is allowed and, to some extent, encouraged to be subversive and, thus, unfaithful to its Western source texts by local governments and/or communities for the sake of voicing Eastern voices, and by Western spectators for the sake of novelty.

Adapting writings on domestic disputes into films, however, brings its own challenges; it is arguably riskier than adapting texts on East-West conflicts. The worst that can happen to the latter is a rejection or a dismissal by foreign and domestic markets while for the former it can entail condemnation, persecution, and imprisonment by offended local governments, political parties, and/or mobs. Trying to be as faithful as possible to original texts that have been provenly well-received by their own governments, communities, and markets is a way out of unwanted controversies and troubles for post-colonial adapters and is an act of depoliticisation. This study has therefore answered, partly and indirectly, Thomas Leitch's question in his book *Adaptation and Its Discontents* (2009): "Instead of constantly seeking answers to the question, 'Why are so many adaptations unfaithful to perfectly good

sources?’ adaptation studies would be better advised to ask the question, ‘Why does this particular adaptation aim to be faithful?’” (128).

Finally, while case studies of Anglo-American adaptations might be abundant, repetitive, and unproductive, case studies of post-colonial adaptations are still very much wanting. The proliferation of the latter case studies could well generate more (post-colonial) metacritical perspectives, which Ray and others have longed for.

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The Dancer. Dir. Ifa Isfansyah. Perf. Nyoman Oka Antara and Prisia Nasution. Prod. Shanty Harmayn. 2011. Film.

The Raid 2. Dir. Gareth Evans. Perf. Iko Uwais. 2014. Film.

The Red Badge of Courage. Dir. John Huston. Perf. Audie Murphy and Bill Mauldin. 1951. Film.

The Year of Living Dangerously. Dir. Peter Weir. Perf. Mel Gibson and Sigourney Weaver. 1982. Film.

Tiga Dara. Dir. Usmar Ismail. Perf. Chitra Dewi. 1956. Film.

Tjidurian 19. Dirs. M. Abduh Aziz and Lasja F. Susatyo. Perf. Martin Aleida. 2009. Film.

Tjoet Nja' Dhien. Dir. Eros Djarot. Perf. Christine Hakim and Slamet Rahardjo. 1986. Film.

Virgin. Dir. Hanny Saputra. Perf. Laudya Cynthia Bella. 2004. Film.

Yang. Dir. Ami Prijono. Perf. Rano Karno. 1983. Film.

Yatim. Dir. Bay Isbahi. Perf. Rano Karno. 1973. Film.

Appendix A

Timeline of Indonesian History, Cinema, and Adaptation

Year	Date	Event
1900	05 December	The first film screening in The Netherlands East Indies (the future Indonesia) was held in Batavia (the future Jakarta).
1901		The Dutch colonial government introduced its ‘Ethical Policy’, by which natives could receive a Western education.
1908		<i>Budi Utomo</i> was founded as the first modern indigenous movement.
1912		<i>Sarekat Islam</i> became the first mass-based nationalist movement.
	18 November	Ahmad Dahlan founded the modernist Islamic organisation Muhammadiyah in Yogyakarta.
1920	23 May	The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) was established in Semarang.

1925		The Dutch Indies Film Commission was established to censor every film coming into the country.
1926	31 January	Hasyim Asy'ari founded the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama as a response to the creation of Muhammadiyah.
	12 November	The PKI revolted against the colonial government and was quickly suppressed.
		The first locally made feature film, <i>Loetoeng Kasaroeng</i> , was released.
1929		<i>Njai Dasima</i> , the first film adaptation, was released.
1930		Sukarno's gave his historic nationalist speech "Indonesia Accuses" at his political trial.
1942		The Japanese defeated the Dutch and installed their own imperial structure in the former Netherlands East Indies.
		<i>Nihon Eigasha</i> , a Japanese-occupation film unit, was established.
1945	15 August	Japan surrendered to the Allied powers.
	17 August	Sukarno and Hatta proclaimed the independence of Indonesia.
	10 November	The Battle of Surabaya, the heaviest single battle of the Indonesian independence, was fought between pro-independence fighters (the Republicans) and Dutch and British troops.
1946		Federal states were set up by the Dutch-occupation government.
		<i>Regeering Film Bedrij</i> , a Dutch-occupation film unit, was established and joined by Usmar Ismail, the father of Indonesian cinema.
1947	20 July	The Dutch military launched its first major military offensive against the Indonesian Republicans.
1948		The <i>Darul Islam</i> rebellion began in West Java, spreading to other parts of the new nation.

	18 September	The PKI began a revolt in East Java to take over the Republic but were defeated by Nationalist troops.
	19 December	The Dutch launched their second assault, capturing the Republican capital of Yogyakarta.
1949	December	International pressure forced the Netherlands to recognise the independence of 'the United States of Indonesia' (RUSI) at the Round Table Conference, Den Haag.
1950		The Indonesian military formulated its doctrines of <i>dwifungsi</i> : a military role in security and socio-politics.
	17 August	Sukarno dissolved the RUSI and proclaimed a unitary 'Republic of Indonesia'.
	06 September	The first parliamentary cabinet was established, followed by six others by 1959. Sukarno held a symbolic position as head of state.
		Perfini, the first indigenous Indonesian-owned film company, was established. Its first production was <i>Darah dan Doa</i> .
1952	17 October	An army-organised strike took place in Jakarta to demand the parliament's dissolution and a general election.
1955	30 March	The first Indonesian Film Festival was held in Jakarta.
	18 April	Indonesia hosted the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, the first convention of the Non-Aligned Movement.
	29 September	Indonesia held the first general parliamentary election, the last free election until 1999.
1957	March	Regional rebellions took place in Sumatra and Sulawesi.
1959	05 July	Sukarno issued a decree dissolving the parliament, reintroduced the Constitution of 1945, and assumed the additional role of Prime Minister, which led to 'Guided Democracy'.
1960	24 June	Sukarno established the People's Consultative Assembly to replace the dissolved parliament.

	17 August	Indonesia severed its diplomatic relations with the Netherlands in protest over the latter's rejection to give up Western New Guinea (West Papua).
1961	04 March	Indonesia signed an agreement with the Soviet Union to purchase armaments for the West Papua liberation.
1962	02 January	The Mandala Command to liberate West Papua was established under the control of Major General Suharto.
1963	01 May	Following pressure from the Kennedy government, the Netherlands yielded West Papua to temporary UN supervision.
	18 May	Sukarno was elected president for life by the People's Consultative Assembly.
	27 July	Sukarno announced his opposition to the creation of Malaysia, marking the Indonesia–Malaysia confrontation.
1964	16 August	American films were banned in Indonesia.
	17 August	Sukarno publicly denounced the United States, and over the ensuing months the PKI attacked American and British interests in the country.
1965	14 January	The PKI called for workers and peasants to be armed.
	30 September	An abortive coup in Jakarta resulted in the assassination of six army generals.
	01 October	Major General Suharto, now the commander of the Army Strategic Reserve Command, blamed the PKI for the coup and launched a counter coup, resulting in the massacre of about one million suspected communists.
	14 October	Lieutenant General Suharto was appointed minister/commander of the army by Sukarno.
1966	10 January	Anti-communist organisations demanded the dissolution of the PKI.
	11 March	Sukarno delegated key executive functions to Lieutenant General Suharto by signing the Order of March the Eleventh (<i>Supersemar</i>). The following day Suharto dissolved the PKI.

	20 June	The military-controlled People's Consultative Assembly raised the status of the Supersemar to a decree.
1967	10 January	New laws were passed to attract foreign investment; restrictions were imposed on Chinese schools, names, and religion.
	07 March	The Assembly stripped Sukarno of his remaining power and appointed General Suharto acting president.
1968	March	The Assembly conferred the full presidential power on Suharto.
1969		Papuan 'representatives' voted in favour of Indonesian rule in 'the Act of Free Choice'.
1970		Nurcholish Madjid, a Muslim intellectual, introduced a religious developmental principle: 'Islam, yes; Islamic party, no'.
1971	03 July	The first parliamentary election under the New Order was held.
1973		The military regime forced the fusion of the political parties.
1974	January	The student uprising broke out in Jakarta as a protest against the Japanese penetration, Chinese Indonesian domination, and government corruption of the economy.
		<i>Atheis</i> , a film adaptation by Sjumana Djaya, created controversy because the content was deemed unsuitable for the religious society although both the novel and the film denounced atheism.
1975	April	A civil war broke out in East Timor, a former Portuguese colony.
	06 December	U.S. President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made a one-day visit to Jakarta to discuss the East Timor crisis.
	07 December	Indonesia invaded East Timor.
1976	19 November	The UN General Assembly rejected the Indonesian annexation of East Timor.
1978		The People's Consultative Assembly elevated the Five Fundamental Principles to the status of mandatory moral education of every citizen.
1982		The first book of <i>The Dancer</i> trilogy, <i>The Dancer of Paruk Village</i> ,

		was published.
1983		<i>Blood and Crown of the Dancer</i> , the film adaptation of <i>The Dancer of Paruk Village</i> , was released.
		Thousands of alleged criminals were murdered by government security forces.
1984	12 September	Muslims protested over alleged insults to Islam in North Jakarta; a riot ensued resulting in many deaths. The regime suppressed Islamist movements.
		<i>Roro Mendut</i> , a film adaptation, triggered debates in the media as the author of the novel protested over the ending of the adaptation.
1985		The government required every organisation to adopt the Pancasila as their sole ideology.
		The second book of <i>The Dancer</i> trilogy, <i>A Shooting Star at Dawn</i> , was published.
1986		The third book of <i>The Dancer</i> trilogy, <i>The Rainbow's Arc</i> , was published.
1987		Megawati Sukarnoputri, Sukarno's daughter, became a parliament member; Suharto prohibited the displaying of Sukarno's images although they appeared frequently nonetheless.
1989		The Free Aceh Movement re-emerged after being nearly wiped out in 1979; repression of its guerrilla activities led to thousands of deaths by 1991.
		<i>Pacar Ketinggalan Kereta</i> , a film adaptation, won best film at the 1989 Indonesian Film Festival.
1990		<i>Taksi</i> , a film adaptation, won best film at the 1990 Indonesian Film Festival.
1991		Indonesia assumed the presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement.
	12 November	Soldiers fired on a demonstrative funeral procession in the provincial capital of East Timor.
1992		The government announced Act No. 8 Year 1992 on film. <i>Badan Sensor Film</i> (the Board of Film Censorship) changed its name to

		<i>Lembaga Sensor Film</i> (the Institute of Film Censorship).
1994		The government announced Government Regulation No. 04 Year 1994, which integrated, updated, and upgraded the existing censorship guidelines.
1996		The Free Papua Movement kidnapped foreign scientists and local foresters. The hostages were freed in a rescue operation led by Major General Prabowo Subianto, the son-in-law of Suharto.
	27 July	Army-backed thugs attacked the headquarters of Sukarnoputri's party and killed many of her supporters.
1997	July	The Thai <i>baht</i> collapse triggered the Asian monetary crisis, and over the following months it crippled Indonesia's economy.
1998	March	Peaceful student strikes against Suharto rose to international prominence.
	12 May	Four Trisakti University students were shot dead by security forces.
	13 May	Memorial services for the slain students led to a riot; looting, arson, and rape by unidentified mobs continued for several days, leaving over a thousand dead.
	21 May	Being deserted by his closest supporters, Suharto stepped down and was replaced by Vice President B. J. Habibie.
	August	The military announced the discharge of Lieutenant General Subianto from active duty after allegations regarding the abduction and torture of student activists.
1999	19 January	A small argument in Ambon city triggered Christian-Muslim conflicts that lasted for years across the Maluku Islands. Over ten thousand were killed.
	07 June	Indonesia held the first free general election since 195.
	30 August	East Timor voted to break away from Indonesia in a UN-supervised referendum. Pro-Indonesian militias resorted to a scorched earth policy that left as many as a thousand dead.

	October	The People's Consultative Assembly rejected President Habibie's accountability report. Abdurahman Wahid and Megawati Sukarnoputri were elected president and vice president.
2000	24 December	Churches were bombed by Jamaah Islamiyah in retaliation for the killings of Muslims in Maluku and Poso.
2001		Ethnic cleansing erupted in Borneo as native Dayaks hunted and killed Madurese settlers.
	July	The parliament impeached President Wahid on the grounds of corruption and appointed Vice President Sukarnoputri president.
2002	February	The Malino Conference ended religious violence in Maluku and Poso.
	12 October	Jamaah Islamiyah bombed nightclubs in the Kuta district of Bali, killing over two hundred people.
2003		<i>The Dancer</i> trilogy was republished in a single volume and translated into English.
2004	October	Indonesia's first direct presidential election elected General (ret.) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.
	26 December	An earthquake-triggered tsunami killed hundreds of thousands in Aceh and caused widespread destruction.
2005	15 August	The Yudhoyono government and the Free Aceh Movement signed a peace agreement in Helsinki.
		<i>Gie</i> , a film adaptation, won best film at the 2005 Indonesian Film Festival.
2006		<i>Fiksi</i> , a film adaptation of <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> , won best film at the 2006 Indonesian Film Festival.
2009	08 July	The incumbent President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won the second direct presidential election.
		The government released Act No. 33 Year 2009 to replace Act No. 8

		Year 1992 on film.
2010		<i>3 Hati Dua Dunia, Satu Cinta</i> , a film adaptation, won best film at the 2010 Indonesian Film Festival.
2011		<i>The Dancer</i> , the film adaptation of <i>The Dancer</i> trilogy, was released and won best film at the 2011 Indonesian Film Festival.
2012		The revised English translation of <i>The Dancer</i> trilogy was published.
2013		<i>Tenggelamnya Kapal Van der Wijck</i> , a film adaptation, was denounced by the Minang community for its depiction of the Minang female character.
2014	July	Indonesia held its third direct presidential election. Jakarta's governor Joko Widodo defeated Lieutenant General (ret.) Prabowo Subianto.
		The government released Government Regulation No. 18 Year 2014 to replace Government Regulation No. 04 Year 1994 on film censorship.
2016	December	Jakarta's governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Christian of Chinese descent, faced a trial on charges of blasphemy after he referenced a verse from the Holy Qur'an.
		<i>Athirah</i> , a film adaptation, won best film at the 2016 Indonesian Film Festival.

Appendix B

Written Communications on *Blood and Crown of the Dancer*

I remember watching *Blood and Crown* on a TV station in the mid-1990s. It was screened late at night when Indonesian TV would broadcast anything they had left in their store rooms. Not only did the late-night screening signify a low-quality show, but it often suggested sexual and violent content. I began searching for the film after I had conducted a preliminary study of *The Dancer*, the second adaptation, and became interested in doing a comparison. Due to it being a relatively recent production, I was under the impression that I would be able to find it easily somewhere. Even when I failed to find it on Indonesian streaming sites and YouTube, where Indonesian films are freely uploaded without any copyright enforcement, I was still confident that I would be able to find it offline.

Hitherto, I am still unable to locate and get a copy of the film despite my persistent search and numerous contacts with relevant parties. Many of them have said they do not have it, while others have not replied to me at all. I have also asked for help from several

prominent figures who have direct or indirect relations with my target institutions, which is the most culturally effective approach in the country to get what one needs. From all of the parties that I have contacted, there are a few that I would like to report and showcase below to illustrate the situation, support my analysis of film archiving in Chapter Two, and provide a springboard to future research.

My first contact with the target parties was with a film archivist responsible for the most complete online documentation of Indonesian films, <http://filmindonesia.or.id>. She helped me check this film in the latest catalogue of Sinematek Indonesia, the largest film library in Indonesia, but could not find it. The archivist said there was a possibility that the film was in the storage room but had not yet been catalogued. Thus, she asked me to visit Sinematek in person because the institution was slow to respond to a phone or email query. She also asked J. B. Kristanto, a renowned Indonesian researcher, who donated his video collections to Sinematek after the publication of his research, *Indonesian Film Catalogue: 1926-1995*. Unfortunately, Kristanto could not remember whether *Blood and Crown* was one of his donated films. Lastly, the archivist also asked a producer of pre-1995 digitalised films but the latter said he could not find this title.

Before receiving the information above, I had actually sent an email regarding the existence of this film to the Haji Umar Ismail Film Centre, the parent institution of Sinematek, but it did not respond. When I eventually wrote to Sinematek, the officer in charge replied quickly, stating that the centre did not have the film. As I was already in the UK for my study at this point, I asked my partner as well as Jakarta-based former students to visit Sinematek and ask directly about the film but the result was also negative. Around the same time, I found an entry for this film in the online catalogue of the National Library of Indonesia. As the library had not responded to my email, I gave it a call. The receiver said that the library only kept a filmography but not a copy of the film. After reading about the

existence of Jakarta Prima Digital, the new film restoration company, I sent an email and a Facebook message to one of its managers but did not receive any response.

Gramedia Film, the production company, has been closed for many years, but I wrote an online query on the website of its parent company, Kompas Gramedia Group. A public relations officer answered, stating that it would take some time to find the film, but she did not reply to my subsequent email. A colleague of mine who worked at Kompas Newspaper suggested to me that I should contact Kompas TV, a new Kompas Gramedia company that might inherit the archives of the defunct Gramedia Film. The TV company did not reply to my query. Later, I sent a message to Kompas Information Centre, which in response advised me to contact Sinematek instead. Finally, my former lecturer introduced me via email to the Vice President of Kompas Gramedia, but he did not respond to our emails.

My next institutional target was ANTV, which, as far as I remember, has screened the film. A public relations officer gave a brief reply, stating that the station could not release the screening copy. She did not respond to my follow-up email in which I explained that I would use it strictly for research purposes and was more than willing to undertake any necessary procedures. None of the film critics who described this film in contrast to the second adaptation gave answers to my questions.

Last but not least, I made contact with the family of the late director, Yazman Yazid. I found out that he passed away in December 2014, two months after my departure to the UK. Several entertainment media reported his death mainly because of the popularity of his TV sitcoms. In an interview after his funeral, his wife said that the late director kept documentation of his works at his home office, and the family planned to make this office a private museum. I contacted the interviewers in the hope of getting his wife's contact details but none of them answered. I also tried without success to search for their names in the phone book of Tangerang District, Jakarta, where, according to the news reports, they lived.

Not long afterwards, I stumbled upon an invitation to attend a *tahlilan* (a public prayer and gathering held after a death) for the late director from a certain person on Twitter. I searched for his account on Facebook and sent him a message, to which he responded quite promptly. He confirmed that he was the son of the late director but, unfortunately, the family did not have the film. Nevertheless, the family would help me to contact those who might have it, including Kompas Gramedia, where his mother used to work and met his father for the first time. A week after that, I asked him if there had been any progress but he stopped responding. Almost a year later, I saw that he had posted on Facebook a picture of his father when he was studying at the Arts Institute of Jakarta. I commented on the picture and indirectly reminded him of my research, to which he replied that the family could not find the film.

I have by no means mentioned here all of the parties that I have contacted to find this film. I also established communication with, to name just a few, the author of the novel, the filmmakers of the second adaptation as well as Indonesian film communities and online video sellers, but none of them own a copy of *Blood and Crown*. Below is a sample of the written communications between the aforementioned people and institutions and myself. The words have been printed verbatim while the formats have been slightly altered for the convenience of the reader as well as for identity protection. All of the individuals' names and contacts, except my own, have been kept confidential for reasons of privacy.

Film Archivist

Subject: Adaptasi Pertama Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk
 From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@peter.petra.ac.id>
 Date: 18-Jan-14 8:06 AM
 To: [REDACTED]
 CC: [REDACTED]

Ibu [REDACTED] Yth.,

Saya Dwi Setiawan, dari UK Petra, Surabaya. Saya mendapatkan email Anda dari Ibu [REDACTED] yang merupakan kawan S3 dari Ibu [REDACTED].

Saya ingin meneliti dua adaptasi film dari novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk untuk rencana S3 saya. Saya kesulitan menemukan adaptasi yang pertama yang berjudul 'Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng' (http://filmindonesia.or.id/movie/title/lf-d023-83-501199_darah-dan-mahkota-ronggeng#.Us2OuPQW1lo).

Apakah Ibu memiliki info bagaimana saya dapat mendapatkan film ini? Terima kasih banyak sebelumnya untuk kerepotannya.

Salam,
 Dwi Setiawan
 Lecturer
 English Department, Petra Christian University
<http://inggris.petra.ac.id>

Subject: Re: Cara memperoleh copy film Indonesia jaman dulu
 From: [REDACTED]
 Date: 14-Jan-15 9:09 AM
 To: [REDACTED]
 CC: [REDACTED] dewey@peter.petra.ac.id

Mama, Ibu [REDACTED] dan Pak Dwi,

Mohon maaf pertanyaan Anda sekalian terlewatkan oleh saya setahun yang lalu.

Saya sudah cek di katalog Sinematek Indonesia yang saya punya (diperbarui tahun 2010) dan film ini tidak ada dalam koleksi mereka, baik dalam bentuk rol film maupun media digital. Beberapa kawan di Jakarta memeriksa ulang dalam 2 hari terakhir dan tetap tidak menemukannya di katalog.

Tentu saja ada kemungkinan bahwa film ini ada di ruang penyimpanan Sinematek akan tetapi belum didaftarkan di katalog. Saya kira selalu saja ada jeda waktu antara film masuk koleksi dan pendaftaran/katalogisasinya.

Saya sarankan Pak Dwi mendatangi Sinematek Indonesia langsung dan menanyakan. Saya tidak menyarankan bertanya lewat telepon karena tanggapannya sering lamban atau kadang tidak ada sama sekali, lebih baik berkunjung. Alamatnya:

Gd. PPHUI Lt.4

Jl. HR Rasuna Said Kavling C-22 Kuningan

Jakarta Selatan 12950

Telp. +62 21 5265268

Ada baiknya Pak Dwi minta staf Sinematek Indonesia memeriksa judul ini di semua bagian koleksi: rol film, VHS, Betamax, dan VCD. Ada kemungkinan Sinematek pernah menerima sumbangan video saat Bapak JB Kristanto menyerahkan koleksi filmnya dari bahan riset Katalog Film Indonesia 1926-1995. Saya sudah coba bertanya juga kepada Pak JB Kristanto, tapi beliau tidak ingat persis apakah film ini termasuk dalam koleksi yang ia serahkan saat itu.

Saya juga sudah bertanya kepada salah satu produsen video yang mengalih-mediakan film-film Indonesia sebelum tahun 1995 ke format digital. Beliau menyatakan belum menemukan judul ini.

Mohon maaf hanya sekian bantuan yang bisa saya berikan. Jika ada kabar lanjutan akan saya teruskan.

Salam hangat,



Usmar Ismail Film Centre

Subject: Koleksi Film
From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@petra.ac.id>
Date: 10-Aug-14 9:24 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Bapak/Ibu Pengurus Pusat Perfilman Usmar Ismail Yth.,

Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya akan melanjutkan studi doktoral saya di De Montfort University, UK. Topik penelitian saya adalah adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film, yang salah satunya berjudul Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng, produksi PT Gramedia Film.

Saya sudah berusaha mencari film tersebut secara online dan offline namun belum membuahkan hasil. Apakah Pusat Perfilman Usmar Ismail menyimpan kopi film tersebut? Bagaimana saya dapat mendapatkan kopinya?

Atas perhatian dan bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Hormat Saya,

Dwi Setiawan
Lecturer
English Department, Petra Christian University
<http://inggris.petra.ac.id>

National Library of Indonesia and Sinematek

Subject: Film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983) untuk Disertasi
 From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@petra.ac.id>
 Date: 07-Jul-15 5:22 AM
 To: Info@pnri.go.id, sinematekindonesia@yahoo.co.id

Yth. Bapak-Ibu PNRI dan Sinematek,

Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya tengah menempuh studi doktoral di De Montfort University, Inggris. Topik penelitian saya adalah studi adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film yang salah satunya berjudul Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983), produksi PT Gramedia Film.

Saya ingin bertanya apakah PNRI dan/atau Sinematek menyimpan film tersebut dan bagaimana prosedur untuk dapat menggandakannya. Jika tidak ada, apakah dapat merekomendasikan pihak yang dapat saya hubungi untuk penelusuran selanjutnya?

Atas balasan dan bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Salam,

--

Dwi Setiawan
 DMU P14164582

Subject: Bls: Film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983) untuk Disertasi
 From: sinematekindonesia sinematekindonesia <sinematekindonesia@yahoo.co.id>
 Date: 08-Jul-15 5:58 AM
 To: Dwi Setiawan <p14164582@myemail.dmu.ac.uk>

Sayang sekali kami tidak memiliki koleksi film tersebut.

terima kasih

Jakarta Prima Digital

Subject: Film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983)
 From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@petra.ac.id>
 Date: 09-Apr-16 12:45 AM
 To: info@jktdigital.com

Yth. Bapak-Ibu JKT Digital,

Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya, dan sekarang tengah menempuh studi doktoral bidang adaptasi di De Montfort University, Inggris. Untuk penyelesaian disertasi, saya sangat membutuhkan salah satu film adaptasi novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* yang berjudul *Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng* (1983), produksi PT Gramedia Film.

Saya ingin bertanya apakah JKT Digital memiliki film tersebut dan bagaimana prosedur untuk dapat membeli/mendapatkannya.

Atas balasan dan kerepotannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Salam,
 Dwi Setiawan
 DMU 14164582

Messages



You're friends on Facebook

Technical Manager at PT. Jakarta Prima Digital

Lives in Jakarta, Indonesia

10/05/2016 00:01

Dwi

Mas [REDACTED] Yth., Terima kasih banyak sudah menerima undangan pertemanan dari saya. Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, UK Petra, Surabaya. Sekarang saya tengah menempuh studi doktoral bidang adaptasi sastra ke film di De Montfort University, UK. Subyek penelitian saya adalah adaptasi novel *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* karya Ahmad Tohari ke dalam film *Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng* (1983) dan *Sang Penari* (2011). Sampai sekarang saya belum menemukan film yang pertama meskipun sudah berhasil mendapatkan screenplay-nya. Karena kesulitan tersebut, akhirnya saya membahas pengarsipan dan restorasi film (adaptasi) lama dan menemukan artikel-artikel tentang Jakarta Prima Digital (JPD) dan nama Anda. Mohon bantuannya jika nanti saya bertanya lebih lanjut tentang JPD demi keperluan penelitian saya. Mohon info juga bila JPD memiliki film yang saya cari tersebut. Terima kasih banyak sebelumnya. PS: Saya sertakan surat dari pembimbing mengenai saya dan penelitian saya. Salam, Dwi Setiawan

Kompas Gramedia Group

Subject: Permintaan Film Darah & Mahkota Ronggeng (1983)
 From: "pr" <pr@kompasgramedia.com>
 Date: 22-Jun-15 4:25 AM
 To: <dewey@petra.ac.id>

Dear Dwi Setiawan,

Untuk permintaan Film Darah & Mahkota Ronggeng akan kami tanyakan terlebih dahulu ke KG Production. Dikarenakan film tersebut merupakan tahun lama sehingga harus kami pastikan apakah arsipnya masih ada atau tidak

Semoga berkenan dan terima kasih :)

Subject: Re: Permintaan Film Darah & Mahkota Ronggeng (1983)
 From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@petra.ac.id>
 Date: 22-Jun-15 2:27 PM
 To: pr <pr@kompasgramedia.com>

Bapak/Ibu Kehumasan Kompas Gramedia Yth.,

Terima kasih banyak atas balasan dan bantuannya. Semoga ada kabar baik :)

Sekali lagi, terima kasih.

Dwi Setiawan
 DMU P14164582

Subject: Re: Permintaan Film Darah & Mahkota Ronggeng (1983)
 From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@petra.ac.id>
 Date: 01-Jul-15 1:48 AM
 To: pr <pr@kompasgramedia.com>

Bapak/Ibu Kehumasan Kompas Gramedia Yth.,

Saya hanya ingin bertanya apakah sudah ada informasi tentang permohonan film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng yang saya sampaikan dalam email sebelumnya.

Atas bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Hormat,

Dwi Setiawan
 DMU P14164582

Kompas Information Centre

Subject: PT Gramedia Film

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 07-Jul-15 4:13 AM

To: "dewey@petra.ac.id" <dewey@petra.ac.id>

Selamat pagi,

Terima kasih atas kiriman Anda, tertanggal 06 Juli 2015:

"Dwi Setiawan

Bapak-Ibu PI Kompas Yth., Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya tengah menempuh studi doctoral di De Montfort University, Inggris. Topik penelitian saya adalah studi adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film yang salah satunya berjudul Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983), produksi PT Gramedia Film. Saya belum dapat menemukan film tersebut meskipun sudah mencari di Sinematek, kolektor dan penjual film lama, stasiun TV, perpustakaan, keluarga sutradara, dll. Apakah PIK memiliki koleksi ini atau tahu di mana saya dapat mengakses film ini? Atas bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih. Salam, Dwi Setiawan"

Kami tidak memiliki film yang dimaksud. Anda dapat mencoba menghubungi Bentara Budaya Jakarta di nomor +62215483008, atau di Dokumentasi Perfilman Indonesia, dikelola oleh Sinematek dan Perpustakaan, di nomor (021) 3101411, 3154863, 3154870 Pesawat 247. Demikian informasinya dan semoga cukup membantu.

Salam,

[REDACTED]

PUSAT INFORMASI

Gedung Kompas Gramedia Unit II Lt.4

Jl. Palmerah Selatan No.26-28

Jakarta 10270, Indonesia

Ph : (+62-21) 534.7710 ext. 5316

Web: pik.kompas.co.id

Vice President of Kompas Gramedia Group

Subject: Film PT Gramedia Film

From: [REDACTED]

Date: 13-Jul-15 1:42 AM

To: [REDACTED]

CC: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@peter.petra.ac.id>

Yth. Bpk [REDACTED]

Semoga Bapak dalam kondisi dan baik dan sehat. Kiranya Tuhan selalu menyertai Bapak sekeluarga.

Seorang rekan-bpk Dwi Setiawan-- sedang mengambil studi S3 di Inggris dan memikirkan untuk menganalisis "Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng" karya PT Gramedia Film yang merupakan adaptasi dari novel karya Ahmad Tohari "Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk."

Pak Dwi sudah menghubungi beberapa rekan yg dulu terkait dg PT Gramedia Film namun tidak berhasil mendapatkan copy film tsb. Apakah mungkin Perpustakaan Kompas mempunyai film tsb dalam koleksinya? Bolehkah pak Dwi meminta kontak orang yang mengurus perpustakaan?

Terima kasih dan mohon maaf telah mengganggu kesibukan Bpk [REDACTED].

Salam
[REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Film PT Gramedia Film

From: Dwi Setiawan <dewey@petra.ac.id>

Date: 30-Sep-15 10:32 PM

To: [REDACTED]

Bapak [REDACTED] Yth.,

Mohon maaf sebelumnya jika saya mengganggu kesibukan Bapak. Saya Dwi Setiawan, rekan dari Ibu [REDACTED] seperti yang sudah diperkenalkan di bawah. Saya membutuhkan film *Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng*, produksi PT Gramedia Film tahun 1983, untuk keperluan penelitian saya. Sebelumnya saya sudah mencari dan menghubungi banyak pihak namun belum mendapatkan sampai saat ini.

Apakah Pak [REDACTED] memiliki informasi tentang penyimpanan film-film produksi PT Gramedia Film zaman dahulu? Apakah ada pihak/petugas yang dapat saya hubungi?

Atas perhatian dan bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Salam Hormat,
Dwi Setiawan
DMU P14164582

Kompas TV

Subject: Film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng
From: Dwi Setiawan <p14164582@myemail.dmu.ac.uk>
Date: 26-Nov-15 1:42 AM
To: <public.relations@kompas.tv>

Yth. Bapak-Ibu Public Relations Kompas TV,

Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya, dan sekarang tengah menempuh studi doktoral di De Montfort University, Inggris. Untuk penyelesaian disertasi, saya sangat membutuhkan film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983), produksi PT Gamedia Film, dan belum mendapatkannya sampai saat ini.

Saya sudah menghubungi Public Relations Kompas Gamedia namun belum mendapatkan jawaban kembali. Saya ingin bertanya apakah PT Gamedia Media Nusantara/Kompas TV menyimpan film tersebut dan bagaimana prosedur untuk dapat membeli/meminjam/menggandakan/melihatnya.

Atas balasan dan kerepotannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Salam,

--

Dwi Setiawan
DMU 14164582

ANTV

Subject: Mohon Info untuk Penelitian
 From: Dwi Setiawan <p14164582@myemail.dmu.ac.uk>
 Date: 20-Jun-15 2:06 AM
 To: <humas@an.tv>

Bapak/Ibu Yth.,

Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya tengah menempuh studi doktoral di De Montfort University, Inggris. Topik penelitian saya adalah studi adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film yang salah satunya berjudul Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983), produksi PT Gramedia Film.

Saya belum dapat menemukan film tersebut meskipun sudah mencari di Sinematek, kolektor dan penjual film lama, perpustakaan, keluarga sutradara, dll. Berdasarkan info dari beberapa kolega, film tersebut pernah diputar di ANTV. Apakah ANTV masih menyimpan film tersebut? Dapatkah saya mendapatkan salinan-nya dan bagaimana prosedur yang perlu saya kerjakan?

Atas perhatian dan bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Hormat,

--

Dwi Setiawan
 DMU P14164582

Subject: RE: Mohon Info untuk Penelitian
 From: Humas antv <humas@an.tv>
 Date: 22-Jun-15 5:56 AM
 To: Dwi Setiawan <p14164582@myemail.dmu.ac.uk>

Selamat siang,

Terkait kebutuhan tersebut, mohon maaf ANTV tidak bisa mengeluarkan copy tayang yang diminta.

Terima kasih.

Salam,
Humas ANTV

Subject: Re: Mohon Info untuk Penelitian
From: Dwi Setiawan <p14164582@myemail.dmu.ac.uk>
Date: 02-Jul-15 3:23 PM
To: Humas antv <humas@an.tv>

Yth. Bapak-Ibu Humas ANTV,

Terima kasih banyak atas balasan yang diberikan. Apakah mungkin untuk mempertimbangkan ini sebagai kasus khusus mengingat apa yang saya kerjakan adalah untuk penelitian dan bukan untuk tujuan komersial? Saya siap untuk memenuhi prosedur/perjanjian yang dibutuhkan.

Atau, saya sangat berterima kasih jika ANTV dapat berbagi info tentang pihak luar (produser/contact person di Kompas Gramedia) yang dapat saya hubungi untuk mendapatkan film tersebut.

Mohon maaf sebelumnya jika permintaan-permintaan di atas merepotkan. Sekali lagi terima kasih.

Hormat,

Dwi Setiawan
DMU P14164582

Film Critic

Messages

[REDACTED]

2 mutual friends: [REDACTED]

Works at The Jakarta Post

Lives in Jakarta, Indonesia

06/07/2015 03:01

Dwi

Ibu [REDACTED] Yth.,

Nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya tengah menempuh studi doctoral di De Montfort University, UK. Topik penelitian saya sementara ini adalah studi adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983) dan Sang Penari (2011). Saya menikmati dan mendapatkan banyak insights dari ulasan Anda di [REDACTED].

Sampai saat ini saya belum menemukan film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng meskipun sudah mencari di Sinematek, perpustakaan, kolektor dan penjual film lama, stasiun TV, perusahaan film, keluarga almarhum sutradara, dll. Saya ingin bertanya apakah Ibu memiliki film tersebut atau mengetahui di mana saya dapat mendapatkannya.

Atas perhatian dan bantuannya, sebelumnya saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih.

Salam,

Dwi Setiawan

Yazman Yazid's Son

Messages



You're friends on Facebook



Lives in Jakarta, Indonesia

13/05/2015 04:47

Dwi

Mas [REDACTED] Yth., Perkenalkan nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya tengah menempuh studi doctoral di De Montfort University, Inggris. Topik penelitian saya adalah studi adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film karya Bapak Yazman Yazid yang berjudul Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983) Saya kesulitan mencari film tersebut meskipun sudah sekian lama menghubungi Sinematek, kolektor dan penjual film lama, stasiun TV, perpustakaan, dll. Saya melakukan penelusuran di internet dan menemukan berita bahwa Bapak Yazman Yazid rutin mendokumentasikan karya beliau. Setelah saya telusuri lebih lanjut saya akhirnya menemukan twitter dan FB Mas [REDACTED]. Saya ingin bertanya apakah keluarga masih menyimpan film ini dan bersedia membiarkan saya menggandakannya demi penelitian saya. Sebelumnya saya sampaikan terima kasih untuk segala kerepotannya. Keberhasilan studi doktor saya ini sangat bergantung kepada film tersebut. Atas perhatian dan balasannya, saya sampaikan banyak terima kasih. Salam, Dwi Setiawan

14/05/2015 03:24



Bpk. Dwi Yth.

Dwi

Halo, Mas [REDACTED]. Senang sekali menerima balasan dari Anda.
Salam kenal ya.



Dear Bapak Dwi Setiawan Yth,

Salam kenal juga. Sebelumnya saya mengucapkan terima kasih yang sebesar-besarnya atas ketertarikan Bapak dalam menggunakan Karya-karya Almarhum ayah saya Bapak Yazman untuk menyelesaikan studi anda, saya merasa sangat terhormat

Mengenai judul film yang bapak sebutkan diatas, yakni "Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng", bisa dilihat tahun pembuatannya yaitu tahun 1983. Kalau tidak salah film ini diproduksi antara Parkit Film atau Gramedia Film (Saya lupa yang mana karena Parkit Film sekarang sudah berubah menjadi PT. Tripar Multivision Plus dan Gramedia Film pun sudah bangkrut). Saya bisa bantu carikan film yang bapak maksudkan diatas, namun saya khawatir film tersebut ada hak cipta yang dimiliki oleh perusahaan yang saya sebutkan diatas, mungkin saya akan coba koordinasikan ke PT. Tripar Multivision Plus apakah mereka masih memiliki arsip untuk film-film lamanya. Karena kebetulan saya mengenal sangat baik Chief Librarian nya.

Untuk mekanisme penggandaan film yang bapak maksudkan, saya juga akan coba tanyakan seperti apa prosesnya. Berhubung saya baru masuk kantor lagi Hari Senin, jd Insya Allah hari senin saya akan kabari bapak Dwi secepatnya ya

Terima Kasih dan saya tunggu info selanjutnya dari Bapak 😊

Dwi

Terima kasih banyak untuk kerepotannya, Mas [REDACTED]. Kalau berdasarkan data, film tersebut diproduksi oleh Gramedia Film. Saya sudah pernah mencoba menghubungi Kompas Gramedia sebagai induk namun tidak mendapatkan balasan. Ada kenalan yang memberi info bahwa koleksi Gramedia Film dihibahkan ke Sinematek tetapi, seperti yang saya sampaikan, Sinematek menyatakan tidak memiliki film tersebut. Tapi mudah-mudahan PT Tripar Multivision Plus juga menyimpannya. Iya, Mas, saya akan memenuhi segala persyaratan administrasinya. Nanti istri saya yang akan membantu melengkapinya karena saya sekarang di UK. Istri saya bernama [REDACTED] dengan nomor telpon [REDACTED] / [REDACTED]. Mohon dibantu jika istri saya menghubungi.

Dwi

Sekali lagi terima kasih, Mas. Semoga ada titik terang.

Dwi

Iya, saya sangat ingin mengangkat karya almarhum di dunia internasional dan mengkajinya dengan serius. Selama ini dianggap hanya hiburan semata padahal sangat kompleks.

15/05/2015 03:46

[REDACTED]

Dear Mas Dwi,

Mohon maaf baru bisa membalas, hehehe. Iya Mas Dwi, kebetulan Ibu saya (Istri Almarhum) adalah karyawan di Kompas Gramedia selama 35 tahun dan beliau tau semua mengenai Kompas Gramedia dan Sinematek. Saya sudah coba tanyakan ke beliau mengenai judul film yang dimaksud dan beliau akan membantu sebisanya untuk bisa mendapatkan film tersebut. Saya juga sudah meminta bantuan kepada Ibu [REDACTED], karena pengalaman beliau sebagai artis senior, mungkin bisa membantu untuk menemukan koleksi film-film lama

PT. Tripar Multivision Plus seharusnya mereka memiliki koneksi banyak mengenai arsip penyimpanan film nasional, hari ini akan saya coba tanyakan. Justru saya dan keluarga yang seharusnya berterima kasih kepada Mas Dwi karena sudah menyempatkan untuk menyelesaikan pendidikan dengan menggunakan karya-karya almarhum hehehe.

OK siap nanti saya akan menghubungi istri Mas Dwi apabila ada info terbaru yaa. Terima kasih dan salam hangat 😊

15/05/2015 05:00

Dwi

Terima kasih sekali lagi untuk Mas [REDACTED] dan Ibu untuk segala bantuannya. Betul-betul kebetulan yang luar biasa Ibu bekerja di Kompas Gramedia. Saya sangat menghargai sambutan baik ini.

15/05/2015 08:30

[REDACTED]

Iya Mas Dwi sama sama hehehe. Justru Almarhum Pak Yazman dan Ibu [REDACTED] bertemunya kan karena mereka kerja di Gramedia, namun waktu Gramedia Film dinyatakan pailit, Pak Yazman langsung di rekrut sama Parkit Film dibawah perintah Pak [REDACTED] langsung.

Sama-sama Mas Dwi, saya juga sangat senang karya-karya almarhum bapak masih mendapat perhatian, kami dari pihak keluarga merasa sangat terhormat dan senang tentunya 😊

21/05/2015 02:36

Dwi

Selamat pagi, Mas [REDACTED]. Apa kabar? Semoga baik2 saja ya 😊 Mohon maaf mengganggu kesibukannya lagi. Apakah ada kabar/perkembangan soal film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng? Terima kasih byk sebelumnya 😊

31/05/2015 02:29

Dwi

Selamat pagi, Mas [REDACTED]. Apa kabar? Semoga baik2 saja ya 😊 Mohon maaf mengganggu kesibukannya lagi. Apakah ada kabar/perkembangan soal film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng? Terima kasih byk sebelumnya 😊

16/06/2015 14:59

Dwi

Halo, Mas [REDACTED]. Sebelumnya saya mohon maaf jika terus menghubungi tentang film Bapak 😊 Saya ingin memberitahu bahwa istri saya sudah menyusul ke UK tanggal 09 Juni yang lalu setelah berpisah hampir satu tahun. Jika nanti diperlukan, saya akan minta saudara/kolega saya di Jakarta untuk mengurus segala sesuatu terkait film tersebut. Jika ada persyaratan yang perlu saya kerjakan dari sini, mohon memberitahu saya juga di kala Mas [REDACTED] senggang. Sekali lagi terima kasih untuk waktu dan bantuannya.

Indonesian Vintage Cinema Community

Messages

[REDACTED]

You're friends on Facebook

Self-employed

Lives in Jakarta, Indonesia

06/04/2015 03:00

Dwi

Salam kenal, Mas [REDACTED], Saya Dwi Setiawan, dari UK Petra, Surabaya, tengah studi lanjut di De Montfort, UK. Saya ingin meneliti film adaptasi jadul "Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng". Sudah saya cari ke mana-mana masih belum menemukan. Apakah Mas [REDACTED] punya atau memiliki info soal keberadaan film ini? Terima kasih banyak sebelumnya. Dwi

[REDACTED]

Wah sayang sekali sy blm punya mbak

Dwi

Hahaha. Saya laki-laki kok, Mas.

[REDACTED]

Itu film sih

Dwi

Apakah ada referensi kawan lain yang bisa saya coba hubungi?

Terima kasih sebelumnya.

[REDACTED]

Haha oh iya salah

Klo temen2 blm ada yg punya jg

Sudah coba hubungi sinematek?

Tp seingat sy sinematek jg gak punya

Tp kli saja skg punya

Dwi

Kata Sinematek tidak ada di katalog, Mas. Tapi bisa jadi belum dikatalog 😊

Nah sambil menunggu saya tanya2 ke yang lain.

■■■■■

Nah itu kyknya emang gak ada d mereka

Sm siapa di sinematek?

Dwi

Saya minta tolong istri saya ke sana jadi saya tidak tahu namanya. Tapi saya dapat info yang sama dari ■■■■■.

Apakah Mas ■■■■■ tahu orang Sinematek yang bisa saya hubungi?

■■■■■

Sy biasa kesana sm mbak ■■■■■. Tp skg sdh keluar

Trus ada mas ■■■■■ jg skg msh disana

Dua mingguan yg lalu sy kesana lgs hubungan dgn kepalanya

Pak ■■■■■

Dwi

Mas, berdasarkan pengalaman, apakah mereka bersedia mencarikan di koleksi yang belum di katalog?

■■■■■

Setau sy sih mereka akan ksh tau klo memang ada

Judul2 yg blm masuk mereka biasanya diusahakan dicari

Tp gak lgs nyari jg sih

Dwi

Gitu ya. Saya khawatirnya film ini benar2 tidak ada dokumentasinya meskipun ada yang bilang pernah diputar di ANTV.

■■■■■

Klo gt coba ke antv mas

Cr bagian library

Dwi

Iya, Mas. Saya sedang mencari keluarga sutradaranya juga. Siapa tahu masih menyimpan. Mohon dikabari kalau Mas ■■■■■ mendapat info juga.

Terima kasih banyak sebelumnya.

Hehe sulit mas klo sm keluarga atau sutradara gw yakin mlh gak punya mereka

Dwi

Iya. Saya baca kalau alm. Yazman Yazid, sutradaranya, selalu mendokumentasikan karyanya dan keluarga berencana menjadikan ruang kerjanya museum pribadi. Tapi masalahnya nyari keluarganya ini 😊

19/06/2015 15:06

Dwi

Halo, Mas. Apa kabar? Cuma mau tanya apakah ada kabar baik dari kawan2 soal film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng 😊 Terima kasih sebelumnya.

Kabar baik mas

Oh iya blm dpt mas

Dwi

Okay. Terima kasih banyak, Mas. Mohon mengingat saya kalau nanti dengar2 kabar 😊

Ok ms

Film Collector and Blogger

Messages

[REDACTED]

You're friends on Facebook

Writer at [REDACTED], Founder at [REDACTED] and Founder at [REDACTED]

Lives in Medan, Indonesia

27/04/2015 11:21

Dwi

Pak [REDACTED] Yth., Perkenalkan nama saya Dwi Setiawan, dosen Sastra Inggris, Universitas Kristen Petra, Surabaya. Saya tengah menempuh studi doktoral di De Montfort University, UK. Topik penelitian saya adalah studi adaptasi novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk ke dalam film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng dan Sang Penari. Saya menikmati membaca ulasan Anda tentang film Sang Penari di blog Anda. Saya ingin bertanya apakah Anda memiliki film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng. Saya masih belum menemukannya meski sudah mencari dan bertanya ke mana-mana. Atau paling tidak informasi di mana saya kira-kira bisa mendapatkannya? Terima kasih banyak sebelumnya. Salam, Dwi

28/04/2015 16:50

[REDACTED]

Wah saya jg blm punya mas, cuma dulu nonton versi lamanya. Mungkin bisa ditanya ke sinematek Indonesia kalo mereka punya copy VHS-nya.

Dwi

Belum ada dalam katalog mereka, Mas [REDACTED]. Apakah Anda ingat pernah nonton di tivi apa untuk saya lacak ke stasiun tivinya?

[REDACTED]

Saya nontonnya di bioskop dan di vhs mas

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Eh sori kepenget

Dwi

I see. Saya masih melacak rumah sutradaranya juga. Beliau sudah meninggal Desember lalu. Masih buntu 😊 Anyway, thank you.

██████

Sama2. Sulit jg sih, even sutradara kita sering gak nyimpen film2 mereka sendiri.

Dwi

Iya, Mas. Saya baca dalam artikel tentang penguburan beliau bahwa keluarganya akan menjadikan ruang kerja beliau sebagai museum karena beliau selalu mendokumentasikan karyanya. Semoga betulan 😊 Tapi saya belum dapat alamatnya.

██████

Coba ntar saya tanya2 kalau ada temen2 di film yang tau

Dwi

Terima kasih banyak, Mas ██████. Senang dapat berkenalan.

██████

sama sama mas

Kaskus, the Largest Indonesian Online Community

Jual Beli - Show Post #1 on thread Film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983)

Film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983)

Rp. 100.000

Lokasi	:	Jawa Timur
Kondisi	:	Second
Posted on	:	20-06-2015 09:12
Terjual	:	0 barang telah terjual
Last Sundul	:	20 June 2015, 09:12:59 AM

Penjelasan Produk

Jika ada yang punya film Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng (1983), tolong PM ya. Film ini adaptasi pertama novel Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk.

Thx a ton!

Appendix C

Published Article

Post-Colonialism from Within: Repoliticisation and Depoliticisation in Ifa

Isfansyah's Adaptation of Ahmad Tohari's *The Dancer*

Abstract Indonesia is largely invisible in adaptation studies and post-colonial film adaptation. As with many post-colonial countries, Indonesia has suffered from a long conflict between the military forces and civil society since its independence in 1945. This struggle is reflected in a novel entitled *The Dancer* written by Ahmad Tohari during the Suharto era and its film adaptation with the same title by Ifa Isfansyah in the post-Suharto era. Using the political theory of depoliticisation, I argue that the adaptation represents the spirit of repoliticisation of the early post-Suharto Indonesia while concurrently offering a distinctive type of depoliticisation typical of the current era. Not only does the study try to shift attention from Anglo-American and Commonwealth film adaptations, but it also offers an alternative to the homogenising discourse of the Centre (the West) and Periphery (the East) and its derivative post-colonial adaptation theories.

Keywords: *Indonesia, Suharto era, post-Suharto era, PKI, army*

INTRODUCTION

This article investigates *The Dancer* (2011), an Indonesian film adaptation by Ifa Isfansyah of an Indonesian novel with the same title by Ahmad Tohari (1982). In so doing, not only does it depart from most work on adaptation that ‘is still dominated by Anglo-American texts’ (Cartmell 7), but it also attempts to offer insights from a largely unknown former Dutch colony into post-colonial film adaptation, which is still dominated by former British colonies. The problems with post-colonial adaptations are not only historical but also theoretical. Post-colonial adaptation studies have relied too long on the homogenising construct of the Centre (the West) versus Periphery (the East), as evident in the proliferation of approaches: just to name a few, mimicry, hybridity, and writing back. The fact is that post-colonial countries and adaptations have their own conflicts, ‘their own internal centres and peripheries, their own dominants and marginals’ (Mukherjee 6).

One of the most prominent conflicts in the history of Indonesia is between the army and the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, henceforth PKI). The struggle began from the dawn of the independence era in the mid-1940s and culminated in the mid-1960s. The early independence era has been known as the Sukarno era, named after the first president, a civilian freedom fighter. Although he was not a member of the PKI, Sukarno drew great support from the then largest political party in Indonesia. Sukarno was removed from the presidency after two bloody events of central importance to the country’s history. The first was the kidnapping, torture, and murder of six army generals by a group of low- and middle-ranking officers in Jakarta on 1 October 1965. The army, under General Suharto, led a successful counterattack against the kidnappers and accused the PKI of masterminding the First of October movement. The second event refers to ‘the widespread pogrom

from October 1965 to mid-1966 of members of the PKI, its affiliated organisations, and anyone perceived to have done or said anything deemed sympathetic to any of these then legal organisations' (Heryanto 77–8). Estimates vary, but the victims of the massacre are between 300,000 to one million dead (Cribb and Kahin lxxiv). Thus, the Sukarno era ended and the Suharto era began.

The Suharto regime tried to control public consciousness and discourse about the 1965–1966 conflict by constructing and enforcing an official version of that history, including through literature and film. The regime instructed the production of *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (*The Treachery of G30S/PKI*) by the State Film Corporation in 1984 and its novelisation by Arswendo Atmowiloto in 1986 (Herlambang 171–2). The story in the nearly five-hour film focuses on the dramatized kidnapping of the generals, their gruesome torture by female members of the PKI, and the glorious counterattack by the army. *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* is completely silent about the subsequent anti-communist purge whereas the film has effectively become the central narrative to justify the massacre as well as to warn people of the latent danger of Communism. The Suharto regime required students to watch the film in school or in a theatre. It was also screened on all TV channels every 30 September until the collapse of the regime in 1998.

The novel and the film in this study are set right before, during, and shortly after the anti-communist pogrom. The novel was first published as a trilogy, namely, *Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk* (1982), *Lintang Kemukus Dini Hari* (1985), and *Jantera Bianglala* (1986) and republished as one book in 2003, 2011, and 2012. The story revolves around the life of a *ronggeng*, a traditional erotic dancer, named Srintil from Paruk village who unknowingly performs in political rallies of the PKI. Following the widespread anti-communist campaign, Srintil is implicated, captured, and imprisoned without trial. She survives the

ordeal only to be betrayed by those who exploit her status as an ex-communist in the anti-communist Suharto era. Due to this novel, Ahmad Tohari reportedly had to face a long interrogation by the military, and the novel underwent a thorough censorship.

In 1983, the novel was adapted by Yazman Yazid into a film entitled *Darah dan Mahkota Ronggeng* (*Blood and Crown of the Dancer*), focusing solely on Srintil becoming a ronggeng. There is no available data on the reception of the first adaptation by its contemporary audience, and the film is actually missing. In 2011, thirteen years after the collapse of the Suharto regime, the novel was adapted again into a film entitled *Sang Penari* or *The Dancer* by a young director, Ifa Isfansyah. This makes the book arguably the only political novel that has been cinematically adapted twice in Indonesia and, more importantly, the two adaptations were produced, respectively, during the Suharto and the post-Suharto era. The second adaptation was nominated for nine awards at the 2011 Indonesian Film Festival, winning Best Film, Best Director, Best Leading Actress, and Best Supporting Actress. Critics claim that the film successfully represents the spirit and idea of the novel (Krisnantari; Kurniasari; Soebagyo). Some even state that it goes further than the novel, revealing the horror that the author witnessed but could not write about due to the oppressive situation in the Suharto era (Sembiring par. 3; Siregar par. 3). Yet there are also some dissenting opinions, such as that of Ariel Heryanto, who argues that *The Dancer* ‘does not take the next step of challenging or transcending the [Suharto regime]’s overall ideological framework’ (102).

In this study, I approach Ifa Isfansyah’s *The Dancer* from a political theory of depoliticisation and politicisation. Matthew Flinders and Matt Wood define depoliticisation and politicisation as, respectively, ‘attempts to stifle or diffuse conflict’ and ‘the emergence and intensification of friend-enemy conflict’ (139). There are three primary forms of depoliticisation and politicisation: governmental, societal, and discursive

(Wood and Flinders). Governmental depoliticisation includes the transfer of governmental power from elected politicians to professionals, experts, or specialists. In the case of Indonesian cinema, this can be seen from the recent purification of the censorship bodies from political parties and the reduced control of the government. Societal depoliticisation involves roles performed by the media (including films like *The Dancer*), corporations (like film companies), and social organisations in demoting social issues to individual affairs. Finally, when certain issues are thoroughly repressed and/or considered normal, natural, or permanent by means of language and discourse, this process is identified as discursive depoliticisation. Governmental, societal, and discursive repoliticisation are the opposites or counter-processes, so to speak, of those types of depoliticisation. Depoliticisation, politicisation, and their primary forms are highly interdependent and at times overlapping.

It is my contention that Isfansyah's adaptation of Tohari's novel represents the spirit of repoliticisation of the early post-Suharto era while concurrently projecting the depoliticisation tendency of the current post-Suharto era. As the first half of the article will show, the discursive repoliticisation of the parties/issues in *The Dancer* is intensely carried out so as to justify the eventual depoliticisation of those parties/ issues. Furthermore, the discursive repoliticisation/depoliticisation in the text signifies the complex interplays between the subjects (the filmmaker, cast, and crew) and the contexts (the government, society, and market) of the adaptation, or, in other words, the societal and governmental repoliticisation/depoliticisation in the post-Suharto era. The second half of the article will be devoted to exploring these relations.

THE TEXT

The narrative of the adaptation can be divided roughly into three stages: (1) the making of the *ronggeng*, (2) the politicisation of the dancer and her community, and (3) the

anti-communist persecution. The discursive repoliticisation/depoliticisation in the film can be seen from the conflicting representations of the villagers, the Communists and the army, and the anti-communist campaign in those corresponding stages. The semiotics (particularly mise-en-scène, cinematography, editing, and sound) of the film similarly challenge, and reinforce, the longstanding images of the three parties in both the novel as well as the Suharto regime's *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*.

The divided villagers

The villagers in the novel and the film represent a community of belief. The belief in question is a local religion called *Kejawen* or Kejawenism, which 'encompasses many non-Islamic elements, especially mysticism and respect for local spirits' (Cribb and Kahin 1). As in the novel, there are power relations between the villagers in the film, but of a different kind and with a tendency to undermine Srintil's character. The Srintil of the film is less politically conscious than her counterpart in the novel. While the Srintil of the novel grows to realise her exploited fate and eventually refuses to dance as a protest against the elders of the village, the Srintil of the film stops dancing because she is broken-hearted. This is perhaps the first depoliticisation in the film, that is, the disempowerment of the fairly politicised female protagonist of the novel. The director admits this transformation while arguing: 'the representation of Srintil in *The Dancer* is based on a fact that we found during the research, that women in 1965 were an object' (Isfansyah, 'Aku' par. 19, my trans.).

The adaptation also reduces the social and spiritual standing of Sakarya, the leader of the village and Srintil's own grandfather. He is now portrayed as powerless and apolitical, in contrast to the power and political astuteness of Kartareja, the leader of the ronggeng troupe and Srintil's mentor. Related to Sakarya's diminished role, the film scarcely

expresses anything about religion, either Kejawenism or Islam, in the way the novel intensely does (see, for example, Lysloff; Al-Ma'ruf). While the novel implicitly promotes an apolitical cultural Islam, the kind of Islam that the Suharto regime could tolerate (see Mietzner 70), at the expense of the *primitive* Kejawenism, the film appears to support secularism. There are indeed the Javanese rituals of finding the dagger, the bathing ceremony, and the *Buka Klambu* (deflowering) ceremony in the film, but their collective significance relies on cultural politics instead of philosophical spiritualism. The film's secularism constitutes concurrently an act of discursive repoliticisation and depoliticisation. On the one hand, the film reasserts the forgotten, non-spiritual dynamics of the religious minority. At the same time, it suppresses the apolitical Islam of the original text and the emerging political Islam of the post-Suharto era.

The division/politicisation of the rural community in the film extends to the ever-controversial area of sexuality. In general, the film's description of the village's free sexuality is less extensive and explicit than the novel. The lovemaking scenes between Srintil and Rasus, her lover in the army, are slightly more explicit than those involving Srintil and other men. Another distinctive feature of the former is the soundtrack, which involves a non-diegetic sound of cello, at times, together with a non-diegetic sound of ronggeng percussion. By contrast, the sexual scenes between Srintil and other men never incorporate the cello sound and always begin with the ronggeng percussion. The cello and ronggeng percussion thus appear to signify, respectively, love and tradition.

Not only does the film syntagmatically differentiate love-based from tradition-based sex, it also divides the latter further into exploitative and non-exploitative. The tradition-based sex in the adaptation centres on the bidding for Srintil's virginity in the deflowering ceremony and the scenes of *happily cheated wives*. Her mentor Kartareja

acquires a great wealth from selling Srintil's virginity to the highest bidders, as symbolised by his newly purchased water buffalo. On the other hand, there are wives who sincerely compete to have their husbands sleep with the famous ronggeng because they believe it helps restore their husbands' virility and fertility. A gift of new sandals from a happily cheated wife symbolises this non-exploitative, tradition-based sex. On top of that, these two events indicate a wide moral division among Paruk villagers; there are those who exploit the Paruk's free sexual practices and those who sincerely believe in them. This moral division is further visually reinforced by Srintil's metonymic gestures. In the case of the exploitative deflowering ceremony, Srintil projects her disdain by looking at herself in the mirror in utter contempt and disgust. By contrast, although she does not love the husbands and practically serves them as a prostitute in the scenes of the happily cheated wives, she always looks calm and even kind to the husbands.

Furthermore, the film does not exercise what Heryanto calls a narrative technique of 'under erasure', which is 'to manufacture and nurture a stigma so it could be rejected' (142). While the novel frames the free sexuality of Paruk village as madness as opposed to the normal, respectable sexuality of Dawuan town (the district seat) the film does not show anything about the Dawuan's sexuality and, therefore, there is neither a comparison nor a counter-sexuality. Moreover, the love making of Srintil and Rasus breaks a number of sexual taboos in Indonesian films. Most of the time, sex would be filmed only when it is a rape or prostitution (Heider 66–9; Sen 144–7). It is rare to see extra-marital sexual intercourse between two consenting adults on screen, let alone between the highly-feared army officer and the heavily condemned communist prostitute. Finally, unlike the novel, the film does not draw any causal relations between the free sexual practices and the tragedy that befalls the village. The tragedy is presented as less divinely sanctioned than politically driven.

The film does not align the politics in the village exclusively with Srintil's sexuality. While the novel suppresses any notion of class and class conflict, the first stage of the film introduces the existence of both in the village. The dormant class divisions in the village are pictured for the first time in a scene at a rich, green field surrounding the village. The rich natural resources of the village are visualised through natural-lighted, scenic, deep space, and extreme longshots. There are well-dressed landowners and their enforcers exploiting the labour of the half-naked working-class villagers, who include Rasus before his military service. This *mise-en-scène* is in conflict with the description of the village in the novel:

Thousands of hectares of wet rice fields surrounding the village of Paruk had been bone dry for seven months. The herons would not find any water, not even a pool a foot wide. Entire paddy fields had been transformed into dry, gray-colored plains. Grassy plants had all withered and died. The only spots of green here and there were the cactus-like *kerokot* that appeared in the fields only during a drought, nature's sacrifice to the sundry forms of locusts and crickets. (Tohari, *Dancer* 1)

The director defends his choice of setting by arguing that hardship does not necessarily correlate with drought (Isfansyah, 'Aku' par. 47). In fact, the selection underlines the old irony that poverty often occurs in the midst of wealth, as well as reinforcing the existence of exploitation and class conflict in Paruk. Thus, if the novel tends to view economic capital as the by-product of cultural and social power relations (as in the wealth of Kartareja due to his position), the adaptation tries to reinvigorate what Bourdieu calls 'the brutal fact of universal reducibility to economics' (253). Above all, this shows that the villagers are already divided even before the external politicisation by the PKI.

The ambivalent communist and army

Although the previous part exposes events which the rest of the country may consider abnormal (particularly the free sexual practices in Paruk), those are part of normal life in the village. The liminality of the film relies more on the collaboration between the ronggeng troupe and the PKI as represented by its local leader Bakar. Always culturally and socially strong, the Bakar of the film is pictured as highly political, perhaps even more so than the Bakar of the novel, yet is always true to his political ideals. When he *uses* the ronggeng troupe for the cause of Communism, Bakar does it in good faith so that the victory of Communism will save the villagers from their wretched existence. Being faithful to his communist ideals, Bakar explicitly rejects the exploitation of female sexuality for political ends as in his dialogue with a landowner. His personal relationship with Srintil is also not seen in the film, as is her indebtedness to him. There is not a single scene in which he talks directly with her, despite his frequent visits to the village. Here, being political and/or politicisation does not necessarily carry a negative connotation, which is radically different from the central discourse of the novel and the Suharto regime's official film *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*.

The positive representations of the political Bakar can be seen in his scenes with Paruk villagers at a *warung*, a place where poor villagers go not only for food and drinks but also social interactions. The choice of the setting and the fact that he, a highly respected, educated man, is willing to come there easily show that the character is *pro- poor*. The atmosphere of the meetings is also set as warm and friendly, as partly created by the intimate distance between the participants. The set is also naturally lit, which paradigmatically sets it apart from the Communists' dark, secret meetings as portrayed in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* and other official texts. The Communists have largely been associated with provocative, unintelligible, and loud speeches at large

political rallies.

The adaptation portrays the communist rallies very differently from the ones in the novel and other relevant texts. They are all portrayed in the film as small and friendly gatherings, and certainly not as ‘packed with people, always turned into noisy, unruly affairs’ as the novel describes (Tohari, *Dancer* 251). Besides the small number of attendees, this is visually achieved through the use of deep focus, medium close up, tight framing, intimate distance, and natural light. The red colour dominates the scene along with the happy faces of the dancing participants. This mise-en-scène is in stark contrast with the *possessed* faces of the dancing communists in the forest of Kemayoran in the middle of the night in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*. Ironically, the only unfriendly, intrusive faces in the rallies belong to the soldiers guarding the events.

Nevertheless, the adaptation represses the symbols of the party throughout the film. Bakar consistently refers to the PKI as ‘my party’ in all his dialogues with the villagers. The red colour dominates the party’s rallies, banners, and attires although, curiously, the hammer and sickle, the infamous logo of the PKI, is completely missing. There are political slogans such as ‘*TANAH UNTUK RAKJAT*’ (land for the people), ‘*WARUNG RAKJAT*’ (people’s food stall), and ‘*MANIPOL USDEK*’ (the Indonesian acronym for Political Manifesto, the 1945 Constitution, Indonesian Socialism, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Indonesian Identity). Those slogans are being painted on the roofs of almost every house in Paruk village. Nonetheless, they can hardly be called the PKI’s slogans because they were common mottos during the left-wing Sukarno era.

The vandalism of the tomb of the village’s patriarch, allegedly by the enemy of the PKI, draws Srintil and other villagers closer to the political party. Bakar is present at the scene of vandalism and begins agitating the angry villagers. However, the ensuing

riot is not directly provoked by him but by Darsun, a non-influential male villager in the novel. Using an eyeline match, the film shows Bakar is left dumbfounded by the unexpected interruption of his speech by Darsun. A similar eyeline technique is used to indicate Darsun's betrayal of Paruk villagers at the start of the anti-communist campaign. The subsequent shots reveal that Darsun is giving a signal to the incoming militiamen to surround and arrest the villagers. More than the previously discussed moral and political contradictions in the village, the character of Darsun directly challenges the traditional, depoliticised image of villagers as jointly propagated by the Suharto regime and the novel.

Nonetheless, the film still implicitly indicates Bakar and the PKI's involvement in the rural unrest. After the Paruk riot, for instance, the villagers sing and dance hysterically as the PKI members do in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*. The riot itself replicates the visual convention of rural anarchy in Indonesian cinema as identified by Krishna Sen: 'the action always takes place in the darkness of the night, with a mob of men in dark clothes carrying lit torches. Minimal lighting is used in these scenes—at times only diegetic lighting' (121). Similarly, there is a shot, with a similar mise-en-scène, in which unidentified people smash the windows of a house of a landowner's enforcer. No direct clue has been given that the attack is orchestrated by Bakar and the PKI, but the fact that the shot is placed (in a montage) between that of a PKI rally and Bakar smiling in the warung cannot help imply their involvement in the assault.

On several accounts, the film still echoes the effect of the dominant discourse of the novel and the regime on villagers. The villagers in the film have not been completely freed from the depoliticising construct that those living in rural areas are unsophisticated and innocent. Some of them are pictured as illiterate and thus ignorant of the meaning of the PKI's slogans and speeches. As Heryanto observes:

With a few exceptions (mainly authored by survivors of the anti-communist campaign from 1965), left-leaning characters in all Indonesian fiction set against the background of the 1965–66 massacre appear either as wicked villains, smart but malicious persons who mislead other people, innocent but hopelessly foolish individuals who are susceptible to communist propaganda, or unlucky for being related to Communists by descent or marriage. Invariably, these fictions convey a familiar message to their implied audience: it is the characters' own fault if they are killed off. [*The Dancer*] makes no exception to this general practice. (150–1)

However, the Bakar of the film does not easily fit into any of Heryanto's stipulated categories. He is a peculiar combination of smart and influential as well as weak and unlucky. If he is guilty, he is guilty of political idealism rather than manipulation, as the novel explicitly suggests (Tohari, *Dancer* 251). Bakar is also easily deceived by his *victims*, as in his encounter with Darsun. Thus, the film's attitude towards ideological communists like Bakar is less straightforward.

Just as the PKI, the army in the film also displays a number of ambivalent qualities, as can be seen from the characters of Rasus and his superior, Sergeant Binsar. The narration of the film is predominantly omniscient, with a few restricted narrations from the point of view of the pre-military Rasus in the early part of the narrative. Rasus' point of view encourages the viewers to empathise with him as they witness how his childhood girlfriend (Srintil), by becoming a dancer, gains cultural, social, and economic capital while he himself remains capital-less. Being broken-hearted, he runs away from the village, works as an office boy in the army depot in Dawuan, and eventually trains as an army officer. This helps the positive representation of the army later on, which, very much like Rasus, starts as an underdog as opposed to the strong

PKI and ends up a winner. In other words, this focalisation establishes the narrative of the film as a classic story of losers to winners or, in the case of Srintil and the PKI, winners to losers.

Rasus is pictured as a diligent and smart pupil of the army in Dawuan, but not to the point that he begins to reflect or talk philosophically as in the novel. Nor does the film character speak with low-frequency words and/or English loanwords, which are common practices of the Indonesian middle and upper classes. The Rasus of the film also keeps his strong Banyumasan accent even after he becomes an army officer. Speaking with the largely marginalised/ridiculed accent, Rasus discursively relinquishes the army's claim to objective truth, which, as Edward Said observes, often grounds itself on the 'language of truth, discipline, rationality, utilitarian value, and knowledge' (216). Further, this rejection also represents a challenge to what Wood and Flinders call 'scientism', that is, 'the use of scientific discourse, expertise, and scientifically determined solutions to depoliticise an issue' (163). This de-scientisation constitutes discursive repoliticisation as it brings the infallibility of the army back into debate and treats it as a biased, political subject.

The ambivalent nature of the army man can also be seen from his visual portrayals. Rasus looks dashing and disciplined in his army uniform and on his army jeep, syntagmatically opposed to his half-naked, unruly existence as a villager. Yet, when he visits his old village, he becomes a villager once again. The fact that Rasus has sex with Srintil during his homecoming shows that he is never *morally reformed* by the *enlightening* army either. He is also pictured as cleaning and praying at her late grandmother's grave. This action is sometimes considered a remnant of the superstitious pre-Islamic culture and condemned by some Islamic radicals as blasphemy. To this extent, the representation of the military Rasus is different from that of the novel and rather

subversive of the culturally and morally perfect image of army officers.

His mentor Sergeant Binsar is presented as a benevolent dictator, which is a no less ambivalent characterisation. In their first encounter, the sergeant slaps the civilian Rasus because the latter is fighting with another civilian. Later, the sergeant is punching and kicking Officer Rasus for disobeying his order. In another scene, however, he treats him as an equal and even asks Rasus to eat his food together with him. Aside from the intimate distance, eating with hands signifies his caring attitude because Indonesians would do this only with close friends and relatives. Rasus also catches the sergeant doing a *sholat*, which is a common marker of religious piety and probably the only Islamic signifier throughout the film.

The restrained anti-communist campaign

The anti-communist campaign in the Paruk village and the Dawuan district greatly embellishes that of the novel, which vaguely narrates the event in the space of a few pages. While the army has insisted that the anti-communist purge was led spontaneously by anti-communist militia without any involvement from the army, the film clearly pictures the involvement of the army and their alliance with the militias. Sergeant Binsar quickly responds to the order from his superior by producing a list of names and instructing his subordinates ‘to secure’ the people in the list (Isfansyah, *Dancer*). Here a political conflict is being depoliticised into a security issue, hence erasing individual, social, and governmental dimensions of the problem.

Yet, to post-Suharto viewers, the phrase ‘to secure’ has too familiar a connotative meaning of ‘to kill’ or, at least, ‘to imprison’, reminding them of the frequent, extra-judicial, political measures taken by the Suharto regime. Working with the rural militia, the army destroys Paruk and detains the accused communists, including

Srintil, Sakarya, and Kartareja. The shots of rural militiamen rounding up the villagers cross-cut with those of army officers approaching the village. Although without identifiable badges, some of the militiamen are wearing the grey uniform of *Barisan Ansor Serbaguna*, a youth militia of *Nadhlatul Ulama*, an Islamic political competitor of the PKI in Central and East Java. The leader of the militia is also bringing and reading a list of names, which Sergeant Binsar apparently shares. The montage ends with the physical meeting between the two forces, one leaving the village to the waiting army trucks and another entering the village to follow up the initial search.

While the novel completely represses the tortures and killings of the Communists due to ‘specific conditions’ (Tohari, *Dancer* 267), the film dares to visualise them, albeit still restrictively. The detentions and interrogations of the accused communists are shot using low-key lighting and in high contrast, thus exposing the inmates but covering the interrogators. The identity of the interrogators is narrowly revealed through their military boots or sleeves. The interrogation sometimes takes place off-screen such as behind a closed door. Srintil is taken out of the detention only to be raped by Darsun, who now turns from a communist sympathiser to a militia man. Although, like her, the rapist is a civilian, his action is clearly known and permitted by an army officer.

Nonetheless, this does not necessarily mean that the film is completely devoid of the army’s depoliticising representations, particularly in the character of Rasus. They appear partly through a dramatic irony in which Rasus is sent on a separate anti-communist operation and is thus unaware and innocent of the fate of Srintil and other villagers. Secondly, Rasus only executes the *ideological* communists like Bakar, and only does so when they are about to run away. In addition, he spends his time afterwards tracking Srintil’s whereabouts, despite verbal and physical abuse from his superiors and

at the risk of being fired from the army. These representations put him in the position of victim, just like his fellow villagers, and therefore blur his political responsibility.

The execution of the *true* communists takes place in a historically accurate setting: a riverbank. Using low-key lighting, the film deploys different techniques of cinematography for the occasion. The victim, Bakar, is shot in a high-contrast, shallow focus, medium close-up. This means that the spectators can easily recognise him and the fear on his face. The killer, Rasus, is shot in a low-contrast, shallow focus, close-up. The result is that it is less easy to identify him but still possible to see the regret on his face. The execution itself is visualised using deep space, medium longshots and longshots, which effectively hides the sheer brutality of the event. It should be highlighted that, while the round-up of the village is shot in broad daylight, the tortures and the killings are filmed in low-key lighting/at night. While the violence during the daylight round-up is entirely committed by the rural militia, the brutality during the dark detention and execution is all committed by the army officers.

As a whole, the narrative and semiotics of the film ambivalently politicise and depoliticise the villagers, Communists, and army. This should not be surprising, as Matthew Flinders and Jim Buller note: ‘the issue of boundaries or conceptual evisceration is . . . clouded by the fact that depoliticisation and politicisation may actually take place concurrently’ (313). Insisting on a sharp distinction between the two forms of discourse ‘may risk suggesting a binary opposition that is a crude characterisation of their complex relationship’ (297). Repoliticisation and depoliticisation should be seen more as ‘a rebalancing or a shift in the nature of discursive relationships that is a matter of degree—not a move from land to sea, but from cave to mountain or valley to plateau’ (297).

In general, ambivalence leans towards politicisation because it destabilises a

unity and reveals conflicts within. However, as in this film adaptation, this can also offer a conciliatory political tone, if not full-scale depoliticisation. The constant, encompassing ambivalences in the film constitute what Wood and Flinders call ‘hyper-politicisation’, that is, ‘the creation of an intense political controversy . . . to then impose a definitive position that closes down political debate (thereby depoliticising the issue)’ (164). The villagers, Communists, and army are being equally and extensively divided/politicised so as to make them and their actions equally wrong as well as equally right. The expected result is thus a conflict resolution or depoliticisation.

THE SUBJECTS AND CONTEXTS

The hyperpoliticisation and the depoliticisation in the adaptation generally correspond with developments in the government, society, and discourse of the post-Suharto era, particularly on the issues of religion, sexuality, and the 1965 conflict. There are delays in time, complications, indirect relationships, and mediation, but there is an essential homology or correspondence of structures between the text, the subjects (the filmmaker, cast, and crew), and the contexts (the government, society, and market).

The filmmaker, cast, and crew

The adaptation’s emphasis on secularism might be related to a shared background of the filmmaker and crew. Hitherto none of the director’s films has touched the subject of religion, which is fairly unique considering that the religious genre is trending in the country and many Indonesian directors have been trying their hands at this genre (Heeren 107–29; Heryanto 49–73). Ifa Isfansyah’s early film *Garuda di Dadaku* (2009) is overtly patriotic or nationalistic, which in Indonesia and many countries is synonymous

with being secular (see Hutchinson and Smith 47), transcending/depoliticising religious, and racial differences for the unity of the nation. Shanty Harmayn, the producer and co-screenwriter, is not known for producing and writing for religious films either. Salman Aristo, the first screenwriter, was involved in the making of the highly successful Islamic film *Ayat-ayat Cinta* (2008) but that is just one of eighteen films that he has so far (co-)written. Yadi Sugandi, the director of photography, has himself directed a number of nationalistic films such as *Merah Putih* (2009), *Darah Garuda* (2010), and *Hati Merdeka* (2011).

The restricted representations of the PKI, army, and 1965 persecution can be partially explained by the lack of interest of the filmmaker. As Heryanto states, young Indonesian filmmakers have ‘no reason for being particularly interested in such a heavy and depressing theme’ (76). In addition, any filmmakers revisiting the 1965 tragedy must face a set of challenges that arise from the obscurity of the subject matter. The military’s official narrative of the tragedy has been seriously challenged (see, for instance, Anderson; Roosa; Scott) but the lack of data (largely destroyed or kept by the military) makes it difficult for filmmakers to present a more definite account of the event. These problems are revealed by the director and co-screenwriter Ifa Isfansyah in his interview:

I took the courage to make this film after I had convinced myself that this novel was about love. So I tried to look at it from a love perspective first. I don’t like politics. I don’t understand it and don’t like it. Doing research, it was the hardest because . . . oh, no . . . reading politics. This film was not about politics, really. I was seeing the politics from contemporary perspectives, from the perspectives of the young generation now. I don’t

understand the incidence of 65. I don't know and don't want to pretend to know. ('Aku' par. 21, my trans.)

The confession above reveals the attitude of the director towards the political contents of the novel. Isfansyah apparently aims to depoliticise the political novel into a romantic film. What he means by 'the politics from contemporary perspectives' is none other than discursive depoliticisation as all the involved parties would be stripped of their conflicting political natures and desires:

The Dancer is non-partisan. Neither pro the PKI, nor pro the military. It is a story about human beings. We don't side with any parties, we side with human beings. The Paruk villagers are human beings, only playing roles based on the costumes they are wearing. You are wearing the green uniform, you are the military. You can be red, too. Or peasants. They are people, illiterate, accidentally becoming involved in many political intrigues. (Isfansyah, 'Aku' par. 51, my trans.)

The other scriptwriters have more or less apolitical attitudes towards the story. Salman Aristo, according to Isfansyah, was primarily tasked with transforming the story of the novel to the film structure, or in his words 'to change the complicated thing to something simple and visual' (par. 12, my trans.). Shanty Harmayn, a business-minded producer and from an older generation, made sure that 'these two young people do not go off limits' (par. 16, my trans.). The nationalistic cinematographer claims that he 'has become one' with the director (Sugandi par. 13, my trans.).

While depoliticising the overtly political content of the 1965 conflict, the filmmaker rebalances the discourse by politicising the less harmful subject of sexuality. Judging from the fresh anti-communist actions in Indonesia (April-May 2016), no matter how controversial a sexual issue could be, it would be still much safer

than a discussion of the 1965 tragedy.

The depoliticisation and politicisation in the film are to some extent supported by the selection of cast. The political Kartareja and apolitical Sakarya are played by, respectively, a senior actor, Slamet Raharjo, and a monologist, Landung Simatupang. Beside his successful acting career, Slamet Raharjo is widely known for his political activism. He regularly plays in a TV show *Sentilan-Sentilun* (2010-now) as a witty, retired Javanese lord who satirically comments on social and political issues in the country. Landung Simatupang has been long famous for his distinctive skills in theatrical monologue but not as well-known for political activism. Srintil's innocence and depoliticisation are supported by the casting of Prisia Nasution, who had never acted in any feature film and had nothing to do with political activism. The highly political villager Darsun is played by Teuku Rifnu Wikana, a young actor mostly cast in bad guy roles. The character of Bakar is played by Lukman Sardi, who is famous for his various good guy roles in his fairly long career. This supports the positive, or at least ambivalent, characterisation of the communist figure. Rasus is just Oka Antara's second leading role after *Hari untuk Amanda* (2010), in which he also plays the good guy. Antara's background helps shape the character of Rasus as an innocent, amiable military officer.

The Batak Sergeant Binsar is played by Tio Pakusadewo, a senior actor with a strong Javanese background. This choice is rather ironic because the Batak sergeant of the film actually replaces the Javanese sergeant of the novel, Sergeant Slamet. This transcultural casting is hardly unique, as it also happens with the characters of Srintil and Rasus. Prisia Nasution is not Javanese and does not speak the Javanese language, let alone the Banyumasan dialect. Labodali Sembiring, a film critic, singles out the inevitable language problem: 'several scenes feature Srintil, played by Prisia Nasution, speaking Javanese, but with the wishy-washy air of a Jakarta teenager in a bad mood'

(par. 10). Similarly, Oka Antara is a non-Javanese actor and non-native speaker of the language. All of these factors underline the secularist spirit of the film, yet this time they do not concern religion but another equally sensitive subject: ethnicity. *The Dancer*, or at least Amelya Octavia and Riri Pohan (the casting directors), seems to highlight the diversity and unity of the casts.

The government, society, and market

The early post-Suharto era was characterised by many sectarian conflicts, separatist rebellions, and other forms of governmental and societal politicisation, which had been successfully repressed by the Suharto regime for 32 years. As with the later Arab Spring, Indonesian Islamist activists welcomed the chaotic yet democratic situation by competing in elections and winning a considerable share of power. More radical activists chose the extra-governmental path by founding the *Al Qaeda*-affiliated *Jamaah Islamiyah* and its cells or Islamist militia groups (Bruinessen). Ironically, the introduction of Islamist policies was in many places supported by politicians from the Suharto-era secular parties, thus ‘outmanoeuvring, co-opting, and marginalising the more consistently Islamist parties as well as the more progressive elements of the civil society’ (Heryanto 43; see also Salim).

As a result, people have become disillusioned with politics in general and political Islam in particular. The Islamists’ power has been much reduced these days, and Indonesian Muslims are now leaning towards post-Islamism, which is ‘neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular’ (Bayat 19; see also Heryanto 24–48). On the surface, it looks similar to the cultural Islam of the Suharto era in that it focuses on religious piety rather than political power. Yet, while the cultural Islamists tend to repress their Islamic identity, the post-Islamists consider identity to be central to their

life. In other words, post-Islamism is a new kind of governmental and, to some extent, societal depoliticisation of religion.

The film's secularism enables the filmmaker to transcend/depoliticise further all the religious divisions plaguing the country. Although the moderate cultural Muslims remain the majority in Indonesia, they are also more or less influenced by both the current Islamism and post-Islamism. The Islamist radicals remain in the minority but what they lack in number they compensate for in outspokenness, boldness, and, not infrequently, terrorism. The filmmaker simply could not rely on the protection of the government on this sensitive matter. The government is pragmatic, sometimes adopting an Islamic identity, at other times a secularistic approach, depending on the needs.

The visual suppression (but not the politicisation) of sex in the film seems to be motivated by similar factors. The protests of Islamic groups towards *sexual* films might directly or indirectly deter the filmmaker from exposing more sexual content on screen. Often, the protests result in the banning of films by the Board of Film Censorship. When it comes to sexuality, there has not been much change from the censorship of the Suharto era. As reported by the director, the Board of Film Censorship maintains more or less similar concepts of permissible sex acts on screen (Isfansyah, 'Aku', my trans.). More importantly, the same report also indicates that censorship depends more on the censors than the guidelines (par. 54). This gives power to whoever controls the Board of Film Censorship. Reflecting the state and spirit of the era, the Board is now heavily influenced by the post-Islamists, who are more enthusiastic about religious piety but less sensitive towards political content.

The permitted visualisations of the Communist and the anti-communist campaigns can be interpreted as a change in the Board's attitude towards political content, which is also confirmed by a military representative on the Board (Isfansyah,

‘Aku’ par. 55). Nonetheless, the restrained visualisations of the symbols, torture, and killing of the Communists seem to be influenced by the prevalence of the military power as well as the existence of two antagonistic groups with regard to the issue of the military and Communists. The liberal and left-wing organisations have long demanded that the military should take responsibility for the anti-communist campaign, and also stop interfering in civilian affairs. However, there are a considerable number of civilian groups, including some Islamist radicals, who would support the return of the anti-communist military to the leadership of the country. The film’s conciliatory tone helps the film secure the approval of both these camps. The left-wing groups welcome the marked expressions of political divisions in the film. Writing for the left-wing publication *Indoprogress*, Suluh Pamuji begins his critique by praising: ‘*The Dancer* by a young director Ifa Isfansyah should be considered a phenomenon in the Indonesian film industry, which dares to take on the love theme with a more serious frame: poverty and the Indonesian political tragedy of 1965’ (par. 1, my trans.). By contrast, the pro-military groups are pleased with the positive representations of Rasus.

Unfortunately, the film failed in the market, attracting fewer than 300,000 viewers and puzzling the critics. Yan Wijaya, a senior film observer, said the film should have easily garnered one million viewers and concluded: ‘there must be something wrong, but I don’t know where the problem is’ (Fahrul par. 7, my trans.). Despite the director’s effort to highlight the love story and tone down the politics, the film is still strongly associated with politics and considered a political film, a category that politically weary Indonesians despise. The fact that *The Dancer* contains much political ambivalence does not help. For too long Indonesian audiences have been denied the complexity of political history, and any representations of it in film, by external and

self-censorship. The audience, as a result, finds *The Dancer* with its ambivalences quite puzzling, if not confusing. As Sembiring reports: ‘some teenagers who were laughing and giggling at the beginning of the film left the theatre with a puzzled look’ (par. 15). This ‘puzzled look’ apparently precipitated the market failure of *The Dancer*.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have shown that *The Dancer* is both politically progressive and conservative as opposed to the less ambivalent judgements of the early criticisms. The film represents the spirit of repoliticisation of the early post-Suharto Indonesia while concurrently offering a distinctive type of depoliticisation typical of the current post-Suharto era. The adaptation displays a revolutionary vigour by politicising the depoliticised contents of the novel as well as the Suharto regime’s official narrative in *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI*. It hyperpoliticises all the parties (the villagers, the Communists, and the army) in the 1965 conflict by exposing their internal conflicts and ambivalences. Yet this very hyperpoliticisation results in a new depoliticisation of the same parties, as it shows that each party involved in the conflict is equally right and equally wrong. While the repoliticisation in the film signifies the situation in the early post-Suharto era, that is, when the public welcomed any kind of debate after 32 years of silence, the depoliticisation represents developments since, when people have become disillusioned with governmental and public debates. In addition to drawing attention away from Anglo- American adaptations and ‘the Anglocentrism of most post-colonial criticism’ (Huggan 20), this study offers a new outlook on the political dimension of adaptation studies as it reveals new principles, actors, arenas, tactics, and complexities in either an ostensibly political or apolitical discourse.

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